VENGEFUL GODS



BY MRS. ATHERTON

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The Immortal Marriage.

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/ENGEFUL GODS

A PROCESSIONAL NOVEL OF THE FIFTH CENTURY, B.C. (CONCERNING ONE ALCIBIADES)

BY

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

No 162.
"
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TO

GEORGE MILLER CALHOUN

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AS AN INADEQUATE BUT VERY SINCERE TOKEN
OF PROFOUND GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION.

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823
A31V

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GLOSSARY[1]

VIRTUES: The word virtue bore no relation to sex among the ancient Greeks. Intellectual gifts and accomplishments were virtues; among the moral virtues were justice, courage, honesty, temperance, high-mindedness, etc. *See* Aristotle.

ZEUS: Jove, Jupiter, Jehovah, God, Ra.

ATHENÈ: Minerva.

MYSTS AND EPOPTS: Initiates and second-year votaries.

STRATEGOS: General-Admiral.

DEMETER: Ceres.

KORÉ: Persephone or Proserpine.

APHRODITE: Venus.

HERA: Juno.

ANDRON: Dining-room, and sometimes living-room.

EUPATRIDÆ: Families of noble birth.

HOPLITES: Heavy-armed infantry.

TRIREME: Warship, with three banks of rowers.

TRIERARCH: Citizen appointed by the State to equip a trireme.

BARATHRUM: Pit near Acropolis into which bodies of political criminals were cast.

"THE CUP": Cup of hemlock, the lethal dose of the condemned.

PROXENUS: Consul-General.

SATRAP: Persian viceroy.

FULLER: Cleaner.

PÆDAGOGUS: A kind of tutor-nurse-valet.

ALCMÆONIDÆ: The great family to which Pericles and Alcibiades belonged on the maternal side.

ECCLESIA: Public assembly.

CHOREGUS: A citizen appointed to equip and pay for the training of the chorus of lyrical and dramatic performances.

[1] For Author's Notes see also page 527.

EUGE! EUGE!: Hear! Hear!

DEMOS: The mass of the people devoted to the principles of democracy.

PALÆSTRA: Gymnasium for boys.

LITURGIES: Public services, imposed on wealthy individuals.

STADIA: There were ten stadia to a mile. Singular: stadion.

MONEY: Obol, drachma, mina, talent. The value of money was so much greater in ancient times than it is to-day that I make no attempt to give any estimate of it. Hetæræ were fond of calculating in minæ.

OLIGARCHS: Conservatives, Tories. Nobles, or Eupatridæ, for the most part were Oligarchs.

ACRAGAS: Agrigentum.

HELOTS: Old Achæan inhabitants of Laconia who were reduced to serfdom.

DICASTERY: the body of lawyers—who were also the judges of a case—sitting in court.

BOOK I

BOOK I

I

THE last thing that Alcibiades had wanted was to marry, but one day on a wager he slapped the face of the father of his friend Callias, and the wealthy and genial Hipponicus was so charmed with the grace of his apology that he offered him his daughter and ten talents as a marriage portion.

Alcibiades was only twenty-six and his first impulse was to refuse. No young man was ever more in love with life, no blooded colt more resentful of harness. He had no desire for permanent women's quarters in his house; his married friends told him that wives wept and sulked and were jealous, and he had enough of that with his hetæræ. When these ladies became insufferable he merely turned them out; but a wife, ignorant and stupid as she might be, and without legal status, was invested with a hateful power as the mother of a man's children and the possessor of male relatives. Moreover there would be no ultimate satisfaction in turning her out were it necessary to get another.

The ten talents decided him. When he came of age he was the wealthiest young man in Athens, but the invading armies had devastated his farms and closed the mines; he intended when peace came to indulge in every luxury and extravagance that money could command, and although he had other sources of revenue more would not come amiss.

Since the outbreak of the war with Sparta and the Peloponnesian Confederacy seven years before, he had been almost constantly in action. He had fought on every coast and was distinguished for high courage

and a certain cool deliberation that never deserted him. When on duty in Athens he led the sorties of cavalry that dashed out unexpectedly to harass the enemy.

But he had managed to be seldom in Athens. That city, crowded with refugees from the Attic farms and little towns, its nights pierced with the wailing of children, and stinking more intolerably than ever, offered few attractions to a young gentleman of his fastidious tastes. He loved action and was content to indulge this particular passion for the present. The Spartans must see the folly of continuing the war before long, and then for politics and pleasure.

Not that he had failed to enjoy himself during these last months, when, much against his will, he was forced to remain on military duty in Athens. He had entertained lavishly and indulged in several wild escapades that had excited disapproval in some quarters, but had been greeted with amusement and indulgence in others ; for he was popular in spite of his arrogance, and extravagantly admired.

Moreover, he had been choregus for a group of Agathon's plays and had startled all Athens by the magnificence with which he had invested the chorus ; and when commanded by the Council to equip a trireme he had been equally prodigal.

He was hailed with shouts of approval whenever he appeared in public, and if he also encountered scowls of envy and hatred his vanity was in no wise abated. He was confident that when his time came to enter public life the men of Athens would give him all he demanded ; and he had every intention of leading them round by the nose, as Pericles, his relative and guardian, had done for nearly forty years. If a few bit his hand, what matter ? Were not noses made to be tweaked ?

No one admitted more freely than he that he delighted in ostentation and extravagance, for it had never

occurred to him that he was not entitled to do anything that happened to please him.

"Arrogant? Why not? Why shouldn't I be arrogant—ostentatious—what you will?" he inquired of his old friend Aristophanes. "What else did the gods intend I should be when they endowed me with every virtue and all the good things of life? And does not the world admit my superiority and encourage me to be Alcibiades and none other? I shall do as I like and be as I like to the end of my days."

"True, the gods have been kind to you," said Aristophanes dryly. "But remember the gods turn sour sometimes, and you are enough to excite the jealous wrath of Zeus himself. As for the world, you make an enemy a day."

"I snap my fingers at my enemies—and if you ever put me in one of your plays I'll break your bald head."

"Break it now!" And the two wrestled like playful puppies.

It was to Aristophanes he confided his reluctance to marry, and his hankering for the ten talents. They were walking between the Long Walls, as both were bound for a banquet at the house of Callias in Piræus.

"If you take my advice you will marry her," said the more practical of the two young men in his sharp decisive tones. "She will have the sympathy of Athens, but she is probably a fool, and you can always lock her out of your own part of the house. The time will come when you will need those ten talents; moreover you will no doubt manage to wheedle others out of Hipponicus, and that possibility will make a good impression in Athens. Your enemies are already whispering that your fortune will soon be dissipated, and your political ambitions will be attributed to a desire to control the revenues of the State for your own private purposes. Besides, Callias in due course

will be the wealthiest man in Hellas, and as both friend and brother-in-law will do much toward shutting their mouths."

These arguments were too sapient to be disregarded, and the next day he waited upon Hipponicus, who was leisurely pacing the columned gallery of his spacious courtyard, called aula.

Alcibiades could be charmingly deferential to his elders when he chose, and he stood before the great man with smiling diffidence. "I am much inclined to accept your generous offer, O Hipponicus," he said. "But you will pardon me if I make a somewhat singular condition."

"Condition?" Hipponicus raised his eyebrows. Then a quizzical smile spread over his amiable features. "Why 'somewhat'? Are you not Alcibiades? What is it?"

"I should like to see the maiden first."

"What! My dear boy! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"You hear it to-day, O Hipponicus," said the young man coolly. "I am assured by Callias that she is beautiful, and has been taught to spin and weave and keep house, but I wish to satisfy myself that she shows no sign of being intellectual. I will not run the risk of marrying an Aspasia."

"But I thought you admired Aspasia above all women!"

"I do, and I love her above all women, but I'd not marry her were she my own age. I'd rather marry an ugly woman than a clever one, and I can say no more than that. They have the impertinence to try to manage their husbands, and even Pericles was wax in Aspasia's beautiful hands."

"It did him no harm," grunted Hipponicus. "That you'll hardly deny. And if you could find another Aspasia it might be the making of you. But there are none such among our girls, and as for my poor little

Hippareté, she does not know her letters and will never dare to say her soul is her own."

"Then she will make the perfect wife for Alcibiades! But I must see her."

Hipponicus shrugged his shoulders, but sent for the girl. He really desired Alcibiades as a son-in-law, for he believed him to have the essentials of a great statesman, and he knew that in spite of his arrogance and wild conduct he could be kind and generous. He still sought Socrates and Aspasia for advice and had moods of humility and high aspiration. No doubt he would settle down in time and become another Pericles. It was greatly in his favour that he was not always running after the new beauties, and if he had had two or three scandalous affairs with women of his own class no doubt they had met him more than half-way. If he lavished time and money on the hetæræ, what more natural in a young man of his class? As for Hippareté, she had been brought up in the religion of obedience and to accept the lot of woman.

They received the girl in the pastas at the head of the court and her father told her to remove her veil. She lifted it with trembling hands and stood with eyes downcast while Alcibiades ran his appraising glance over her from the tip of her tiny sandal to her crown of bright brown hair.

She was a small slim girl, very graceful and well-modelled. Her regular features were suffused with a becoming blush and her long fluttering eyelashes seemed made to fan her hot cheeks. Her mouth was full and soft but without character, for she was only sixteen. Suddenly she raised a hand to her breast and turned as if to run away.

"Do not go, Hippareté," said Alcibiades gently, for he was enchanted with her appearance. "Will you not look at me?"

He had the most musical of voices and he could

infuse it with a winning tenderness, for no man was more accomplished in the arts of sex.

The pink flame left her cheeks and she looked like a marble before the colours were applied ; but she had been taught obedience and that low vibrating tone was irresistible. She raised her dark lashes and he met the soft brown gaze of a frightened deer. But as his eyes held hers there grew in her own such an expression of bewildered admiration that Alcibiades was completely carried away. The handsomest man of his time, he had seen that look before, but never in the eyes of a young girl, and the novel experience gave him the sensation of beginning life anew. His dark blue eyes were blazing as he turned to Hipponicus.

" I love her ! " he cried. " And I will make her a good husband. I swear it by all the gods." And as he was quite sincere at the moment both father and daughter believed him. The girl gave a little cry, and ran back to her own secluded quarters. She sang at her spinning-wheel every day until the wedding, and for a few weeks after.

II

Three years later the " Peace of Nicias " was declared, and Athens drew her first long breath in ten years. True, she had been passionately exalted over the victory of Sphakteria and had publicly demonstrated her joy when the Generals Demosthenes and Cleon returned to Athens with two hundred and ninety-two prisoners. But this great event was succeeded by a disastrous defeat at Delium ; and when Amphipolis, that proud colony of the north, was captured in the following autumn, the Athenians told one another gloomily that the gods had deserted them and the glory of their city was gone past recall. The only ray of hope was the Spartan hostages. Some sixty or

eighty of these captives were men of wealth and distinction, and their loss, quite aside from that of Sphakteria and Pylos, had spread consternation in Lacedemonia. Moreover, it had saved Attica from further invasion, and the farmers had begun to replant their little estates.

Brasidas, the greatest of the Spartan generals, received his mortal wound at Amphipolis, a blow from which the terrified Sparta felt it never could recover. Cleon, the leader of the Athenian Demos for seven years, had fallen in the same battle. It was well known that the two kings, Agis and Pleistoanax, were anxious for peace, and Nicias left Athens at the head of an imposing embassy to engage in negotiations.

After six months of wrangling Sparta agreed to restore Amphipolis, the important fortress Panakton in the mountains between Attica and Bœotia, and six other cities captured in the course of the war, in return for the prisoners and five towns taken by the Athenians and their allies. The peace was to last for fifty years.

The men who had fought and endured during that long and terrible experience had a glorious vision of an Attica dotted once more with peaceful farms, of flowering country estates, little towns, flourishing olive groves and vineyards ; above all of Athens again at the head of a great empire. They discarded their gloom like a worn-out himation, and the Agora was thronged as of old with citizens discoursing on every subject under the sun, or crowded about Socrates and Prodicus in the barber shops listening to the play of dialectics ; gay symposia were given every night ; widows and mothers ceased from wailing and sometimes forgot to weep in private ; lovely and accomplished hetæræ came from Corinth and Ionia. The mines at Laurion swarmed with slaves leased from Nicias, Alcibiades, and other wealthy citizens, and the harbour of Piræus was lively with trading ships from all parts of the Ægean and far beyond. Sophists, mathematicians, philolo-

gists, grammarians, flocked to the "University of Hellas." The columned temples on the Acropolis, the sublimest vision ever immortalized in marble, looked down upon an Athens almost as happy as in the golden days of Pericles.

Gaiety and light-heartedness were as natural to the Athenians as their grim acceptance of disaster, and bubbled up when this momentous Treaty was signed like the fountains of the city long choked with filth.

Nicias, commonplace, slow-moving, utterly devoid of genius, but high-minded, patriotic, and a good general under favourable conditions, had enjoyed for some time past the complete confidence of the people. The Athenians, war-tossed and weary beyond expression, had arrived at a state of mind where they placed prudence above valour. His successful negotiations with the Spartans had made him the popular and apparently invincible leader, and although there were grumbles over some of the provisions and omissions of the Treaty, and louder and severer criticisms at the return of the prisoners before Sparta had fulfilled any of her own obligations, they were silenced in the general rejoicing.

III

There was one man in Athens, however, who made his dissatisfaction heard and that was Alcibiades. During the past year he had been much in Athens, for he had been wounded at Amphipolis and invalided home. His recovery was rapid, but he had his reasons for remaining in Athens, and found no difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. The people, under the influence of Nicias, were languid and apathetic, and no more troops were sent to the north.

He had plunged into politics as soon as he left his

bed, for the time had come to plant the seeds of his new career ; he knew that with the deaths of Brasidas and Cleon peace would not be long delayed. Although the traditions of his house on both sides were democratic, he allied himself with Nicias and the oligarchical party, not only because it was more consonant with his haughty and arrogant temper, but more likely to further his ambitions at the moment. He intended to be elected a Strategos as soon as he had passed his thirtieth birthday, and his immediate ambition was to be distinguished as head of the embassy that must soon go with offers of peace to Sparta.

As to the latter he had begun to lay his plans long since.

When Cleon and Demosthenes returned to Athens with the Spartan prisoners he had invited Endius, the most eminent of these deeply annoyed gentlemen, and six others to live in his house during the term of their detention. As friendship with Sparta, in times of peace at all events, had been a tradition of his family since the days of the Dorian invasion, and as he had assumed the office of Proxenus, and put forth all his charm when proffering his hospitality, the invitation was gratefully accepted. The guests were entertained royally whether he was at home or not, and they were probably more comfortable than they had ever been before in their lives. Comfort, much less luxury, were words of little meaning in Sparta.

He had spoken several times in the Ecclesia, and although too impatient ever to be a rhetorician, he had studied the art of close keen reasoning with Socrates and Prodicus, and all the tricks of the trade with the popular sophist Protagoras. Moreover, the Athenians delighted to look at him and to listen to his voice both deep and musical, its charm enhanced by a slight lisp. (When not on his guard his rs lapsed into ls.) They were inordinately proud of him, for they believed no man had ever been so favoured of the gods ; that

he had seen the light in Athens was a good omen in itself.

Beautiful beyond all men in both face and form, in an age when handsome men were almost too common for remark, brilliant, fascinating, eloquent, resourceful, accomplished, audacious, full of surprises, an impeccable soldier of iron endurance, sprung from two of the greatest families of Hellas—boasting gods and heroes in their ancestry—and with the welfare of Athens ever on his silver tongue, they looked to him as their natural leader when this distressful war was over, and regretted he was not a few years older at the present crisis.

They shook their heads when they heard of his wish to go as ambassador to Sparta. This was the moment for middle-aged prudence, to create the best impression possible. The Lacedemonians might regard them as hopelessly frivolous if they sent a young man not yet thirty, and the hero of too many famous escapades, to represent the Athenians ; this was no time to make what might be an irretrievable mistake.

Nevertheless they might have succumbed to his specious arguments—and eloquence—had it not been for the Spartans themselves. They got wind of his desire and sent a messenger to Athens stating they would negotiate with no one but Nicias.

To the unutterable chagrin of Alcibiades, the Head of the State was sent to Sparta with Lachês and other solid citizens and he was left to cool his heels at home.

Nor was this all.

When he had bidden farewell to the guests who had enjoyed his hospitality for four years, he told them frankly he wished to be appointed Proxenus with due formalities. They promised him they would lay the matter before the ephors immediately upon their return ; but when Endius took this obligation upon himself his proposal was treated with derisive laughter. They would trust their affairs to no agent as young and lawless as that scapegrace Alcibiades, whatever the

respect in which they may have held more dignified and substantial members of his house.

Socrates came upon him as he was raging up and down the aula, having just kicked out the messenger who had brought him the ill news.

"Get out!" he roared. "I hate the sight of you with your Spartan coat and naked feet! I wish I might never be reminded of Sparta again as long as I live!"

"What is the matter?" Socrates' bulging eyes pretended to blink before the wrath to which he was not unaccustomed.

"Matter? I have been insulted by Sparta. I, Alcibiades, son of Cleinias! Endius is a false friend, an ingrate. I wish I had left them all to sleep in the streets—and I spent a fortune on filling their bellies!"

Socrates seated himself on a marble bench, crossed his hands on his paunch, and made the offending members as inconspicuous as possible.

"Tell me about it," he said soothingly. "Remember, the Spartans were never to be trusted, and for that reason I cannot rejoice with my fellow-Athenians over the Treaty. I fear that Nicias——"

"Nicias is an old fool!" shouted Alcibiades, instantly diverted. "The Treaty is a joke. It won't last a year. Not if the Spartans find it more to their interest to break it. And do you think that if I had been at the head of the State those prisoners would have been sent home before Sparta had forced Amphipolis to surrender to us as a token of her good faith? They dare to say I gave my consent to the return of those prisoners! It's a lie! It's a lie! Shade of Pellicles! To think that a doddering old idiot like Nicias should be the leader of the Athenians! But, by Zeus, I'll pull him down before another year is out! And I'll make Sparta wish she had never been born!"

"You have not told me your personal grievance." Socrates had seen the abrupt exit of the messenger, and his curiosity was less philosophical than usual.

Alcibiades could hardly articulate. "I wished to be confirmed Proxenus of Sparta, and they will have none of me! They laughed, by Zeus, they laughed!"

"But reflect, dear boy, they have never appointed a young man to represent them in any country. They have no confidence in youth—save on the battlefield. Middle-aged and elderly men are always carefully selected to administer their affairs in foreign states. If your father were alive he would not be forced to ask twice."

"That may be." Alcibiades was still glowering. "But I hate them all the same, and from this day I am their enemy."

"Do not do anything to disturb the peace, such as it is," said Socrates anxiously. "Athens must have a respite. Remember, you are ambitious to be a statesman above all things, and you must consider nothing but the good of your country."

He was used to handling Alcibiades with tact, and was relieved but not surprised to see the angry young man's brow clear and his eyes flash with something higher than rage. Then Alcibiades shrugged his shoulders.

"True," he said, "I shall consider only the good of the Athenians. But I'll no longer work with Nicias. He has betrayed us whether he has sense enough to know it or not; he always did have a weakness for the Spartans, and they put a ring in his nose. If it hadn't been for Lachês no doubt he would have given up Pylos too. But I made Lachês and the others swear they would never yield on that point. My mind is made up. I shall lead the Demos. It has no real faith in Hyperbolus and will receive me with acclaim."

"Oh!" Socrates moved uneasily. "Think twice, Alcibiades. I have no faith in the Demos, as you well know. It is a ridiculous anomaly that a great Empire should be governed by the undisciplined mob."

"It was not undisciplined under Pericles," said

Alcibiades shrewdly. "If it has faith in a leader it will follow him willingly."

"It is eight years since Pericles' death, and the Demos has been demoralized by Cleon—to say nothing of poverty, plague, and war."

"It only needs the right kind of leader, and now that it is exalted after ten years of hardship and depression, this is the moment for a strong man—a young man—to take hold and mould it as he will."

"You have much to learn before you can become a great leader of men." Socrates, now that he had dissipated the worst of his favourite's bad temper, had no intention of flattering him further. The time had come to instil a proper humility ; a seed it appeared to him he was always implanting only to see it explode from the shifting soil of that tempestuous mind before it had time to take root. "Self-control among other things. When I came in here a while ago you looked more like a furious little boy deprived of a new ball than a Pericles in embryo."

Alcibiades smiled and sat down beside the wise friend whom from time to time he acknowledged as master. "I deserve a lecture," he said, throwing an arm over Socrates' broad shoulders. "And I'll take it if you will let me give you a new cloak. Black. Brown. Blue. Yellow. Anything but grey. I hate to be reminded of Sparta by the best of my friends. And I gave every one of those damned Spartans a new garment ! " he cried, grinding his teeth. "They went home like sleek hogs decked out for the market-place."

"Perhaps that is the reason they failed as your emissaries. Sparta prefers hard muscles."

"It may be, but the fact remains that Sparta has insulted Alcibiades, and through him the great house of his father ; and one day they shall pay the penalty. I shall do nothing precipitate, but I may trust them to make one false move after another, and to-night I

shall call a meeting of my club, and ask it to go over with me to the Demos."

"That will be precipitate enough!"

"I have made up my mind," said Alcibiades firmly. And Socrates sighed and said no more. He knew that his influence over this headstrong young man extended so far and no farther.

IV

Pallas, thrice born,
Gracious Lady Athenè,
Keep thou safe this city,
And her citizens free of woes and civil strife.

The dinner was over and the kraters of wine and the drinking cups had been brought in. There were neither flute girls nor hetæræ present to-night, for clubs met for serious discussion, and eschewed frivolity and pleasure for the moment.

The members of Alcibiades' club, reclining on their couches in the lofty andron, lifted their voices in a pæan to the titulary goddess of Athens, and then looked at Alcibiades expectantly; they knew he had summoned them on business of importance, and his face as he finished the song and drained his cup was suddenly grave and stern.

"I think we are all agreed," he said, "that the Treaty was concluded in the interest of Sparta and not of Athens, and that so far she alone has derived any benefit from it——"

"*Euge! Euge!*" shouted the listeners as one man.

"And that Nicias is a weak old fool who should be in bed with a hot stone at his feet instead of holding the fate of Athenians in his hands."

"*Euge! Euge!*"

"I have made up my mind, therefore, that the time has come to depose him—before he accomplishes the complete ruin of the State."

"And how may it be done?" asked Callias when the *Euges* had subsided. "He has the confidence of the Athenians and is the hero of the hour."

"Not of all of them," said Critias. "I hear him denounced constantly. Amphipolis and Panakton are as far off as ever, to say nothing of the Athenian prisoners in Bœotia."

"But we know the Spartans have sent emissaries again to both places," said Axiochus gloomily; "and if they keep their word Nicias will remain in power, no doubt of that. They cheered him in the Ecclesia yesterday. I hissed, but no one heard me."

"No doubt the Ecclesia was packed with the clubs of Nicias and other Oligarchs that support him," said Charmides. "I wish I had the courage to speak in public! I would have got up and denounced him then and there. But I am more timid than ever since the war has made me so poor I have to eat the public loaf unless my friends take pity on me. Oh, for the good old days when I was the beauty of Athens and my father drawing wealth from his quarries and farms!"

"You are welcome to eat at my table every night," said Alcibiades. "And you are always persuasive in private. Much of the best work of the clubs is done by mingling quietly among those we wish to convert, and employing every subtle art of persuasion."

"True. Tell me what to do and I'll do it. And as you have sent the slaves away, pass me down that krater."

"What is it you have in mind, Alcibiades?" demanded Aristophanes sharply. "Out with it. We are called here to-night to make some momentous decision, unless I am much mistaken."

"First I must ask you to regard it as a club secret for the present. I shall announce my decision in the Ecclesia at the proper moment, but the preparations leading up to it must give rise to as few rumours as possible."

They gave their promise readily enough. Even Callias was accustomed to defer to Alcibiades although he was some ten years older. Politics interested him mildly; he divided his time between pleasure and the sophists, of whom he was a magnificent patron.

"Then listen." Alcibiades raised himself and leaned across his table. "My distrust of Nicias is so great, and my fears for the future of Athens in his hands so intolerable, that I have determined to circumvent him. I cannot do that if I remain in the oligarchical party——"

"He calls himself a Moderate," said Androcles, pointing his nose.

"Bastard offspring of the Oligarch," said Alcibiades contemptuously. "At all events the Oligarchs are behind him, and I can accomplish nothing as a member of that degenerate party. After all, democracy is the tradition of my house, and it has suffered exile and bled on many battlefields in that cause. I long since regretted I was led away by my ambitions—I admit that unworthy motive freely."

"And you are thinking of going over to the Demos—and not for ambition's sake!" Aristophanes shot him a keen satiric glance, then realized that Alcibiades was in one of his patriotic moods and had persuaded himself that ambition played no part in it.

"Yes," said Alcibiades, fixing his luminous eyes first on the poet and then on each of the others in turn. "Yes. That is my intention, and I ask all of you, for the good of Athens, to go with me."

An agitated murmur ran round the couches. They gazed at him with wide-open eyes, and several sat up. "The Demos?" "Go over to the Demos?" "You?" "Us?" "But we are aristocrats. What have we to do with that mob?"

"We will lead it." They had never heard his voice so authoritative; he had drawn his level brows down over those brilliant eyes in a manner that gave his

face an expression of almost forbidding maturity. "We will restore it to the pliant condition of the days of Pericles—who numbered more than one man of his own class among his followers, you may remember. For that matter Nicias is an aristocrat, although he enjoys the confidence of all parties just now only because circumstances have favoured him.

"It is natural that the Eupatridæ should command in all things, for only they have the authority the gods gave them with their condition. And, what is quite as important, education by the sophists. If the truth were known, the Demos likes to be led by its betters. Never for a moment did those men give the allegiance to Cleon they gave to Pericles, the proudest aristocrat in Hellas. If they had not been demoralized by war they never would have permitted that son of a tanner to rise to power. They never really loved him and grew sick of his coarse eloquence. That is the secret—aside from his cursed prudence—of the gradual ascendancy of Nicias. He may be a poor orator but he is a refined one, and a gentleman—little else as he has to recommend him! But they soon can be made to see that he has served his purpose, and served it ill enough."

"And you propose to serve Athens best by making yourself leader of the Demos," said Callias with an indulgent laugh. "Well, why not? You were born to be a leader of something, and I see no other chance. It will at least be amusing to watch you, and I for one agree to turn democrat—here's to your health!"

"I am glad you have come to your senses," said Aristophanes; he had little use for either party, but his sympathies were always with the farmers, no inconsiderable part of the Demos. He employed his vitriolic pen to scourge Oligarchs and Demos alike, so it were for the good of Athens. "I'll make a tour of the farms to-morrow."

Alcibiades gave him an approving nod. "That is

the way to talk. Others must mingle with the people, warn them and win them. Critias, you are the one to persuade all other clubs that are not devoted to the interests of Nicias to ally themselves with us, and work for the common good. Tell them they must choose between Nicias and Alcibiades, between the young man who is bound to win, for he already has the love of the Demos, and the old, whose hand is too feeble to hold what he has."

Critias nodded. Alcibiades had given him a congenial task. Clever, restless, accomplished, a dabbler in literature and science, a natural schemer, he hated the present state of affairs, and being denied the gift of leadership, was willing to be the most conspicuous satellite of this rising sun as long as he promised excitement, intrigue, and political profit. And perhaps he liked Alcibiades as well as he was capable of liking any man ; he believed in the destiny of that favourite of the gods and was proud to be associated with him.

There were twenty-three members of the club, and all were not to be persuaded to change their politics in a moment. But not only were they pledged to stand by one another, and, above all, by their leader, but they were deeply resentful of the precipitate return of the prisoners and anxious for the future. Moreover, with Alcibiades in power, their own ambitions would be reasonably sure of fulfilment. He had carefully concealed his natural arrogance at this meeting, and they always forgot it whenever he chose to be either serious or charming.

After much discussion, for each wished to make his own importance felt, and a generous patronage of the kraters, one and all agreed they would follow him in peace as so often they had done on the battlefield. They pledged themselves to begin their conversations with democratic followers of Nicias on the morrow, and prepare their minds for the leadership of a young, energetic, and ardently patriotic Strategos, the while

instilling the poison of distrust for the present Head of the State.

"Let Eupolis write another comedy glorifying Nicias if he dares!" cried Aristophanes. "For my part I'll write another *Knights*."

Alcibiades sprang to his feet, his serious mood vanished in a flash. "Eupolis!" he shouted, rocking with mirth. "He has strutted like a peacock since the last Dionysia! Let us take our revenge to-night. Let us pull him out of his bed and duck him in the sea. Come along! Come along!"

And shouting and laughing, the young men ran pell-mell out of the house to finish the night in a manner highly satisfactory to themselves; the only protest trajected from the unfortunate poet, who was rowed well out into the bay of Phaleron, thoroughly ducked, and then left to swim to shore as best he could.

V

ALCIBIADES awoke with an uneasy conscience next morning, for the wine was out of his head. He felt that his part in the climax of the night before, amusing as it had been at the moment, was hardly the conduct appropriate to the future First Citizen of Athens. Moreover, the man may have caught his death of cold, to say nothing of the intolerable humiliation. After all, he was one of the best of the comic poets, and Alcibiades, like all Athenians, had a great respect for intellect.

He clapped his hands, and his personal slave, Saon, entered carrying a plate of boiled cabbage; that homely antidote for the potations of night.

"The bath is ready, O Master, and many men await you in the aula."

"Tell them I cannot see them for an hour yet. I must pay a visit to the Mistress." Alcibiades always

remembered Hippareté when his conscience, or what passed for that rudimentary organ, was active. "Announce my visit to her and return here. And I don't need that mess this morning. Bring the bread and wine."

His marble trough was in an adjoining room, and after Saon had poured hot water over him and then cold and rubbed him down, he bade him open his chests and lay his new himatia on the couch.

"The crocodile green is the most becoming, Master," began the man eagerly, but Alcibiades interrupted him.

"I shall wear white to-day. I wish you to take this blue one—gaudier than I like with those yellow stripes—to the house of Eupolis and present it to him with my compliments—and—ah—apologies. Take him also a small bag of drachmæ and one or two gold pieces. Tell him that Alcibiades is confident that a man of his years and understanding will forgive the irresponsible conduct of youth—at an hour when there is much wine in the head!"

And Saon, who, although devoted to his master like all of the slaves, was not above listening at doors, concealed a smile and went his way.

Alcibiades dressed himself leisurely before the silvered bronze mirror, carefully adjusted the long folds of the new mantle of white summer wool, draping one end gracefully over the left shoulder, and hummed a tune.

> Love with me and sport with me,
> Love with me, wear crowns with me. . . .

His room had two doors besides that leading to the bath; one communicating with the pastas, a large alcove at the head of the court, the other with the women's quarters, which he kept carefully locked. He reflected that he had not seen his wife for twenty or thirty days, and sighed with regret that the charms

of woman should be so fleeting. He had been madly in love with Hippareté for almost a month—and then had regarded the summons to sail with the fleet as a sign of high favour from the watchful gods.

Certainly war solved many problems. A wife grew accustomed to long absences and the changes involved. He had let her down gently, and no doubt she was as happy as most women. She had her child and her household and her spinning-wheel. What went on in her pretty little head he had never troubled himself to inquire. He prided himself on his knowledge of women, as represented by the hetæræ and certain ladies of his own class who had pursued him from boyhood and left him without an illusion, but a man's own wife perforce must be a chattel and no more.

If she was beautiful and submissive, she was certain to find favour with her husband and be rewarded by his lust. To be sure, most wives shared the thalamos, the large bedroom furnished for both master and mistress, and sat at table in the andron when no other man was present, unless some member of her own or her husband's family; but Alcibiades was even less domestic than the average Athenian, and he had returned from Sphakteria with the fixed intention of resuming his life as a bachelor. Hippareté had been politely turned out of the thalamos, and his excuses were so charmingly expressed that she was really convinced of his reluctance to disturb her by his irregular hours. As to her banishment from the andron he never dined there save in the company of his friends, and as often was elsewhere.

His visits to her own modest room grew more and more infrequent as the years passed, but at least there had been no abrupt severing of their relations, for, as Aspasia had once said to Pericles, he had "much kindness of disposition." And occasionally he shed the light of his countenance upon her in a morning visit.

Avoiding the pastas, for he had no intention of being diverted from his purpose by the challenge of impatient friends, he unlocked the door and entered the inner court.

It was a peaceful scene. The day was mild, and Hippareté, wearing a pale blue chiton, the loose single house garment, sat at her spinning-wheel near the altar, little Alcibiades playing with his toys at her feet. From the open doors behind the pillars, where the slave-girls were spinning and weaving, came a murmur of voices and once a light laugh. The house was in order long since, for it was nearly nine o'clock.

"Good morning, dear Hippareté," cried Alcibiades gaily; and the girl—she was barely nineteen—rose to her feet leisurely, and greeted him with a faint smile.

"Good morning, Alcibiades," she said politely. "I hope all is well with you."

"Never better, dear one." He kissed her lightly on the cheek, and then stooped and lifted his son, who had run forward with a shriek of delight and was clinging to his mantle. Little as he saw of this glorious being, he never forgot him, and with the ingratitude of children, loved him far more than his mother.

Alcibiades kissed him heartily and then tossed him in the air, laughing at his gurgles of delight. When he had repeated this performance several times, enjoying himself thoroughly, he drew forward a chair, sat the child on his knee, and smiled upon Hippareté once more. She had resumed her place at the spinning-wheel.

"Let that rest for the present," he said. "I wish to talk to you—and to see your pretty eyes. I see them, alas! too seldom. But this house is always crowded with men; we think of nothing but politics these days."

Hippareté was quite aware of the ladies entertained in the andron, to say nothing of other rooms beyond

that locked door, but she smiled prettily and folded her hands in her lap.

Her red mouth was no longer soft and immature, but looked like a painted bow in her delicate face. Her eyes were no longer those of a startled fawn, but had acquired a depth that entirely escaped her husband's casual regard. And if Alcibiades was in a domestic mood, it became her to meet him half-way.

"There is little to talk about," she said with a shrug. "The baby—servants—household affairs. What else have women to talk of?—save gossip, and that would not interest you."

It was quite true that Alcibiades when about to pay one of his perfunctory visits always wondered with an inward groan what on earth he was to say to her; but one cause of his high good humour this morning was the assurance that he had a subject for conversation of absorbing interest to himself, at least.

"I came first of all to look at you," he said gallantly. "To make sure you were well and happy. And then to tell you of my plans for refurnishing the other part of the house. It is an ugly old barrack, for my father, unlike yours, cared little for beauty and elegance; but now that peace has come I intend it shall be the finest house in Athens. You, too, will enjoy it, for I am sure you spend much of your time in the pastas and andron when I am abroad."

"I am quite content here," she said placidly. "But if you are refurnishing there are a few things I should like for my own part of the house."

"You shall have them," said Alcibiades graciously. "You have only to give the list to the steward."

"Thank you, dear husband! And what are your plans? I need hardly be told they are magnificent."

"They are! Whenever I go to the house of Callias, or of Aspasia—more beautiful than ever—I return deeply dissatisfied with my own. Now, the time has come to accomplish my wish. We have a remarkable

Acc. no: 1518

if somewhat unreasonable painter here, named Agatharchus, and I shall give him orders to decorate the walls of the aula with scenes from the great battles in which the Athenians have been victorious, and of the andron with gods and goddesses——"

"Naked, of course!"

"You forget that Athenè is always draped." Her husband spoke coldly. He was unappreciative of irony or humour in women.

"But surely Athenè would be out of place in an andron—presiding over symposia! Aphrodite, clad in her girdle, and possibly embraced by Bacchus, would be far more welcome to the eye, I fancy. But tell me of the pastas," she added hastily, for he was staring at her with disapproval, not unmixed with amazement. "Surely you will have tapestries there, not pictures."

"Very clever of you. But I had forgotten—you went once to the house of your brother. Tapestries, certainly. An agent was dispatched some time since to Sardis in Persia. I have sent to Miletus for carpets and curtains, chests, couches, and day-beds inlaid with ivory and silver; to Thessaly for arm-chairs. Our own potters, smiths, and sculptors will supply all else that is needed to make the house of Alcibiades both luxurious and beautiful."

"And how long before you tire of all that luxury and beauty, Alcibiades? How long after you obtain a thing do you value it?"

"That is beside the question. It is fitting that the house of Alcibiades shall be unique in Athens."

"And will it not cost many talents? The word almost frightens me. A talent is such a vast sum."

"Why should you know anything about money, apart from exercising due economy in your own part of the house?" He was smiling at her indulgently once more. "Dicon tells me you are an admirable manager, and that he has never yet been obliged

to remonstrate with you on the conduct of the house."

Hippareté shrugged her graceful shoulders. "With a good steward like Dicon to advise one, expenditures are easy to regulate. But I should like to indulge in certain extravagances myself. My himatia, chitons, and sandals are not nearly as fine as those of my friends. I have worn these simple woollen tunics, woven and made by my slaves, ever since I married, and without complaint; but I should enjoy a day in the bazaars with a pouch full of drachmæ in my hand!"

Alcibiades rose. "Why did you not say so before? No wife of mine may visit the bazaars, however attended, but I shall tell Dicon to have the merchants bring their wares here for you to choose from—although why secluded women should want finery passes a man's comprehension."

Hippareté rose also and looked steadily into those amused patronizing eyes. "You forget that we attend wedding and birth ceremonies—although so far I have attended none. There have been no ceremonious occasions since I grew up! But now, no doubt, women will try to be happy once more, and open their doors. Besides, there is the theatre, and even if we must go veiled, you may be sure that every woman recognizes every other and discusses her clothes.

"There is another thing you have not thought of—being a man. Or perhaps you have never heard. We women visit one another whether permitted or not, and no husband could prevent us unless he locked us up—which he would tire of after a while. They always exhibit the clothes in their chests, besides examining every detail of their visitor's. I am tired of being little better dressed than the wife of an artisan. After all, I am the daughter of Hipponicus, the sister of Callias—and the wife of Alcibiades, who has more himatia than any woman in the State."

This was the longest speech he had ever heard her

make, and its content was equally astonishing. He stared at her for a moment with a sensation of uneasiness, then dismissed it with a shrug.

"Oh, very well," he said lightly. "The lives of women must be dull enough, and they are entitled to their little compensations. You shall go to all the ceremonies, and call on your neighbours as often as you like, provided you slip in and out like a shadow, heavily veiled, and attended by your old nurse. And the wife of Alcibiades must dress as befits her station. Only, you must never go near the Agora. Do you ever go to the house of Aspasia?" he asked, stabbed with a sudden dire suspicion.

"Never. What use would the great and learned Aspasia have for a little ignoramus like me?"

"She used to be very fond of instructing the ignoramuses of her own sex—and received little thanks from the husbands, for some of those women got out of hand and it took the war to subdue them. Mind you never go to that house, or I should feel obliged to punish you severely."

"Even as I punish little Alcibiades! But it has never occurred to me to go there, and I have seen her only once—at my wedding. And then I was too frightened to look at her. But I hear she remains very beautiful although far from young."

"Years have nothing to do with Aspasia," said Alcibiades loyally, and reflecting that all women were cats. "I must go now to my friends."

He kissed her on the other cheek, tossed the boy again, set him down gently, and made a dignified exit.

Hippareté, with a small secret smile, returned to her spinning.

VI

No circumstances could have been more propitious for the ambitions of Alcibiades. As the months passed a

feeling of uneasiness grew and spread over the failure of Sparta to compel the return of Amphipolis to her old allegiance, and Bœotia to surrender the mountain fortress of Panakton.

Nicias was re-elected at the spring Ecclesia, which, fortunately for himself, was held before the Athenians had fully emerged from their first violent reaction to hope, gaiety, and pleasure. But the time came when he was greeted with averted eyes as he walked abroad, and with little enthusiasm when he ascended the Bema.

It might have been impossible for the members of Alcibiades' club to create an atmosphere of distrust and dissatisfaction if Sparta had sent a force to Amphipolis, or if Nicias had had the energy to call out the troops and sail for the north. But they took a complete and skilful advantage of the circumstances ; and if they gave full rein to their youth at night, they spent their days in fruitful activity.

Alcibiades wisely confined himself to enhancing his popularity by making handsome contributions whenever the State announced itself in a sudden poignant need of money, by distributing largesse among the poor, excoriating the sloth of Sparta in the Ecclesia, and refraining from any more public escapades.

When he appeared in the Agora his brow was serious, and he conversed with the philosophers, avoiding politics. The name of Nicias rarely passed his lips.

Gorgias of Leontini had come to Athens as soon as peace was declared, and Alcibiades rivalled Callias in his patronage of the famous sophist, who discoursed almost daily, in his rapid, convincing, and logical manner, in the aula of his house, followed up and down by a score of ambitious young Athenians.

Athens soon had other causes for uneasiness besides the failure of Sparta to fulfil her part of the Treaty. Rumours came on every wind from the Peloponnesus.

The long alliance of Sparta with Argos was on the point of expiring, and Corinth was doing her best to

persuade Megara, Mantinea, Elis, Tegea, and other autonomous City States, to form a new alliance under the leadership of Argos, once the first power in the Peloponnesus. The Chalcidiceans and Bœotians were invited to enter the projected confederacy and unite against both Sparta and Athens. Word came that Sparta had marched against Mantinea and Elis. If she were defeated and a powerful new alliance formed under Argos and that mischief-making Corinth, Athens, worn out, depleted in men and treasure, would be involved in war once more.

However, Sparta soon demonstrated that she could take care of herself; and when Bœotia and Megara contemptuously refused to recognize the pretensions of Argos, the proposed alliance fell through.

But the Athenians had no sooner ceased to congratulate themselves that peace was now reassured than rumours once more began to fly. New ephors had been elected in Sparta and they were openly hostile to Athens and the Treaty. . . . Sparta had formed a secret alliance with Bœotia. . . . A new alliance was to be effected between Sparta and Argos—who had managed to keep out of the war, was wealthy and populous, and had hitherto been friendly to Athens. . . . Bœotia was to deliver Panakton to Sparta that she might barter it for Pylos.

The surrender of this important fortress, at the beginning of the following year, seemed as far off as ever, and Amphipolis remained obdurate.

The unpopularity of Nicias grew daily and Alcibiades was cheered in the Ecclesia.

VII

The famous hetæra Theodoté was seated before the bronze mirror in her bedroom reducing the width of her eyebrows with a pair of fine tweezers. A slave-

girl was anointing the roots of her hair with olive oil highly perfumed; the room indeed was redolent of several kinds of strong scent.

She was a large sleepy-eyed woman with an expression of mingled indolence and insolence, her rather heavily modelled face rich with the beauty of youth. Her love of luxury was manifested in this room as in the rest of her house; the cover of the day-bed, the wall-hangings and abundant cushions were of gorgeous Oriental silks heavily embroidered, and a Sardian carpet covered the floor. Her dressing-table was laden with gold and silver jars containing every aid to the toilet of a beautiful woman.

On a chair beside her sat her new intimate friend Nemea, a blonde beauty from Ionia, who was wrapped closely in a red woollen mantle; the spring day was cold and the high window open to admit light, for commercial glass was unknown in Athens.

"I wish I had remained in Miletus," she said, shivering. "It is always warm there, and here one has to sit on a brazier to keep from freezing."

"You will not complain of the cold in another month," said Theodoté, her nose almost touching the mirror. "How I wish I had been born with eyebrows as delicate as yours!"

"Be thankful you don't have to dye them—and your lashes. My wretch of a maid nearly put my eye out the other day, but she'll not soon forget the beating I gave her. They must have heard us both shrieking in the Agora."

Theodoté sighed. "What a bore it all is! Nobody criticized my eyebrows in Corinth. They liked other things about me too well. But these Athenians are the most exacting men in Hellas, and as narrow eyebrows please them I must undergo this torture every ten days. And this horrible Attic water makes my hair come out."

She shook her head impatiently. "I have had

enough of that," she exclaimed to the maid. "Run away. And don't listen at the door."

"After all," she went on, when she was alone with the most congenial friend she had made in Athens, "that is the least of my woes. It is this being bright and intelligent all the time, amusing the wretches, that wears me out. Being a 'companion' to men lest they leave one for those brats of boys who are like young gods to look at and whose heads are stuffed until it is a wonder they don't burst. I feel as though my own would fly into a thousand pieces trying to understand Athenian politics, reading up Homer and plays and Pindar, thinking up witty stories to relate when Androcles brings his friends to dinner—to say nothing of the long hour when he expects me to entertain him or listen to him before he is ready to go to bed. That is not what we were made for, but there is no end to the demands of men. Thank Hera they are not always around and we can undress our minds occasionally."

"We Ionians have the advantage of you there." Nemea took up a hand-mirror and examined her nose. She put her finger daintily into a pot of white paint and applied an infinitesimal amount to the tip of her exquisite profile. "We are educated in something more than the technique of Aphrodite, for Ionian men, although not as intellectual as Athenians, expect women to be able to talk to them on any subject. We are trained from childhood to be gay and amusing, and moodiness is slapped out of us. But it is easy to be both in Miletus—in a beautiful city where the sun always shines and is warm, and where one is born with a heritage of gaiety."

"Why didn't you stay there?" asked Theodoté pointedly.

Nemea shrugged her famous shoulders. "Why did you leave Corinth? Do we not live for change and variety? Is not Athens the fashion? Did not all

the world flock to Athens as soon as peace was declared ? I came as soon as I could get away. But although the Athenians are the handsomest men in the world they are not as lavish and generous as I expected."

"You should manage to get hold of Alcibiades, although he is behaving himself at present. I lived in his house for a month last year, and he gave me everything I asked for and more besides; he is as reckless in his generosity as in all things, and the most fascinating creature on earth as well. But we had a row and he turned me out. He is as fickle as the wind in summer."

She sighed and expertly removed an almost invisible hair. "I would have held him if I could. However ! I am really more content with Androcles, for although I like him well enough I'll never love him and worry about to-morrow. He keeps me in good style, if he has put in a steward to regulate the expenses; he is amiable enough, if he does look like a handsome fox; and he is the sort of man to be constant when satisfied. And I am set up in a house, which I prefer. It isn't every wife who can be locked out like that little Hippareté."

Nemea shook her head. "I am thankful I had saved money enough to take a house of my own, for I have had enough of being dependent on the whim of one man. I take a lover when it pleases me, and another when I am tired of him, or he is not generous enough. But I have my eye on Callias. The war has affected his fortune very little—his two fortunes, for I understand that Olympias, his mother, left him one almost as great as his father's——"

"Don't build any hopes on Callias. His tastes do not run to women. But when envoys come from all parts of the Empire to pay the yearly tribute, keep your eyes open. Remember, we go to the theatre unveiled. No doubt many rich Barbarians will come also, to hear the last play of Sophocles or Euripides, to

say nothing of this young Aristophanes who has put out the light of the old comic poets. But I do hope you will stay in Athens." She laid down the tweezers, her task accomplished. "I seldom make intimate friends, and these Athenian women are so jealous of foreigners. To you I can say anything, and if I could no longer see you every day, after these last three months, I should feel quite abandoned."

Nemea's eyes were cold but she had a dazzling smile. "Nor could I exist without you, dearest Theodoté. You alone have kept me from being homesick—and I'll not go back to Miletus to be laughed at. They'd swear I was a failure in Athens. But if Callias is out of the question, do contrive that I meet Alcibiades. Your Androcles is intimate with him, is he not?"

Theodoté laughed. "He hates him, if you want the truth. But it must go no further. They belong to the same political club and are working together to bring about the fall of Nicias. It is said that Alcibiades will be elected a Strategos this spring, and before that will come out boldly as leader of the Demos. He is waiting for the right moment to declare himself, although the Demos is already sure of him, and as mad about him as it was about Pericles. But Androcles, although it is to his interest to follow Alcibiades at present, is bitterly jealous of him. He would like nothing better than to be the handsomest man in Athens, the most popular, the most charming, and the predestined leader of the Athenians—you should hear him curse the gods when he gets on that subject. But it suits him just now to attach himself to Alcibiades, and pretend loyalty. When it is more to his interest to betray him, he'll not hesitate."

"Talk about women! And how hard those poor men work! Thank heaven I am a woman. When I get sick of the very sight of a man I lock my doors, give out I have a toothache, eat sweets and read one of Aristophanes' naughty plays. They wonder what

lover I am secreting and that makes them all the more determined to possess me. They besiege my doors, and send me presents—good gold darics as well as jewels. And without so much as a smile in return! I shall be quite rich when I retire to marry some respectable old man in Miletus."

Theodoté sighed. "Money slips through my fingers. I shall probably end as an old hag of a procuress. Have a sweet?"

The two were munching contentedly when a slave pushed aside the door-hanging.

"Another caller, O Mistress. Rhodippe would speak with you."

"Now, what does that spawn of Athens want?" muttered Theodoté. "To scratch my eyes out, no doubt. Shall we see her?" she asked of Nemea.

"She's the best gossip in Athens. Yes, do!"

VIII

THEODOTÉ ran forward as the Athenian courtesan entered the room and embraced her passionately.

"Darling Rhodippe!" she cried. "How sweet of you to come! Nemea and I have just been talking of you and wishing you were here."

Rhodippe returned her embrace, kissed Nemea, and threw off her mantle, displaying a richly embroidered chiton that revealed every movement of her lithe restless body. She was a tall handsome young woman, delicately bedizened, and with much play and intelligence of expression.

Her bright, darting glance missed nothing, and Theodoté was angrily conscious that she had left the tweezers in full view on the dressing-table. Nemea touched her mass of projecting curls furtively.

"I have come to tell you the latest news—may I have a sweet? . . . How delicious! Where do you get them?"

"They came on the last trading-ship from Syracuse," said Theodoté demurely.

"Ah! Your devoted Androcles. He spends a fortune on you. I shall tell my Critias what I think of him to-night——"

"What is your news? Do you not see we are expiring of curiosity?"

"Aha! Wait until you hear! A galley—nay, a procession of galleys—came early this morning from Egypt." She paused dramatically.

"Is that unusual? The war didn't interfere with trade between Egypt and Athens."

"Ah! But this was a private galley. And the others were filled with slaves and chests." She paused again and helped herself to another of the sticky sweets.

"How provoking of you, dearest Rhodippe! Do go on. Who is it? Some rich merchant who comes to spend money in Athens?"

"You forget that the merchants in Egypt are women and send out only their minions."

"True. Thank the gods I am not an Egyptian. Fools—to work instead of making men work for them. Who cares for that sort of power? We have far more if they only knew it. But go on! Go on!"

"These galleys belong to a woman named Tiy, who has just inherited a fortune on the death of her mother, and set sail immediately after for Athens. Now what do you suppose she has come for?"

"To visit some woman of the Eupatridæ, no doubt, as she is of their class."

Rhodippe shook her curly head. "Rumour says otherwise. I hear on the best authority that she is bored with life in Egypt, the more as the men of her race are contemptible. She will marry none and take none as a lover."

Theodoté shrugged her shoulders. She took no interest in the doings of respectable women and was

feeling cheated. "No doubt she could marry an Athenian, especially if she brings a fortune with her. If the marriage is illegal, she'd probably care little for that. If she is clever, as all Egyptians are said to be, and handsome, and rich, all Athens will flock to her house. Look at Aspasia. How old is she?"

"Twenty-two or three, and she has already held office in the State. I hear she is very handsome, but you know what those big masculine Egyptian women are. No—the worst I haven't told you! She means to live an independent life here, and you know what that means."

"A hetæra?" Theodoté drew her sore eyebrows together, and Nemea hissed. "There are enough of us already in Athens . . . still, if she's rich she'll not be after our hard-earned minæ."

"Zeus knows what she wants," mumbled Rhodippe over her third sweet. "To rival Aspasia, perhaps, although I never heard the Egyptian women were intellectual. But if she's not after the men's money chests, they'll be all the more mad about her. I don't like the prospect. She's a new style in looks, wealthy enough to ask nothing of them—they're always ready to run after anything new, and they'll be making detrimental comparisons."

"They couldn't do without us," said Nemea comfortably. "There are a good many men in Athens. But a rich and independent hetæra will extinguish us more or less; no doubt of that. What in the name of Aphrodite does she want to be a hetæra for?"

"Just that. And is it not the greatest life in the world? And are not the men of Athens the handsomest in the world? In Egypt the men who want to avoid being a slave of a husband and live an easy life—instead of spinning and cooking and taking care of the children—paint their faces, dye their hair, scent themselves, and wear fancy mantles, that they may find favour in the eyes of some one of those amazons

and be kept in idleness. No wonder Tiy, if she happens to have a little more imagination than the others, has set out in search of something better."

"Where did you get all this information?" asked Nemea enviously. "It is only the Piræans who communicate with Egypt."

"Aha! That is just it. One of my old patrons is a rich Metic of Piræus—Brotachus the Cretan. He has been in Egypt more than once and has correspondents there. There is no doubt of the truth of what I have told you. He came to see me this morning and gave me the whole story."

"And where is this creature now?"

"She is lodged for the moment in Piræus, until her steward—a big Nubian who speaks Greek—finds her a house in Athens. She has brought a whole retinue with her, slaves of both sexes."

"Wasn't Tiy the name of a famous Pharaohac queen—a thousand years or so ago?" asked Nemea ruminatively. "I lived for a time with an old scholar in Miletus, and I remember he talked of a queen of that name for whom he had a great admiration—yes, it comes back to me. She was the wife of one fool and the mother of another—who set up new gods and wanted to convert the world to brotherhood and universal peace. The ruin of Egypt was the immediate result."

And she smiled complacently at Rhodippe.

The Athenian was not to be outdone intellectually by any Ionian. "I could have told you that if you had let me get in a word edgeways. This Tiy claims descent; that is well known in Thebes. And now she would be a hetæra in Athens! No doubt there is laughter on Olympus. The Egyptian gods are probably howling in their own part of the heavens."

"We may have to poison her," said Theodoté gloomily. "There has never been anything like that

in Hellas. What a sensation she will make! It bodes no good for us. And if she sits with us in the theatre——"

"No poison will ever get past that black bodyguard of hers. But as for the theatre—there are only so many seats reserved for the hetæræ, and we may be able to crowd her out. But do you know what my own idea is? This! She has come here in the hope of capturing Alcibiades."

"Alcibiades!" Once more Nemea hissed, and Theodoté stamped her foot, as she exclaimed: "But of course she has heard of him! It is said that his beauty and his audacities are talked of even at the court of the Great King. Why not then in a Persian satrapy? Well, let her capture him. He'll tire of her in a month."

"Oh, let us give her two as she is a novelty," said Nemea. "I can wait that long. What a marvellously lovely chiton, dear Rhodippe! Where did you get it?"

And the conversation became even more eager and intimate.

IX

Two days later it was known that the Egyptian had driven up from Piræus in the night and disappeared into a house that stood on a low hill not far from the Pnyx and overlooking the Agora.

The excitement in Athens was intense, but the men put no faith in the story that she had come to join the ranks of the hetæræ. Her family was one of the most distinguished in Thebes, and her mother, Setepeura, had been an executive of importance and power, high in favour with the overlords in Persia; just before her death they had talked of appointing her Satrap. It was said that her daughter inherited her gifts and ambitions.

Far more likely she had come on a secret mission,

possibly to implore aid in throwing off the yoke of Persia. A mad idea, if true. They had had their fill of war and were not likely to embroil themselves with the most powerful of the Barbarians for the benefit of a woman's state.

There were five of these ridiculous anomalies besides Egypt (or had been) : Lydia, Lycia, Libya, Germania, and one somewhere in Gaul. Even Sparta had but half-rid herself of her former ignominy. Far be it from the Athenians to lend their aid to any one of them. Let them stew in their own juice.

Nevertheless they were consumed with curiosity, and eagerly awaited a summons of the Council to her house ; as she was a woman of high rank no doubt she would expect them to wait on her, and even an Egyptian would hardly show herself in the Ecclesia.

They attempted to pump the immense Nubian slave who bought supplies in the market-place for the household, but the only answer to their adroit remarks was a ferocious scowl.

"I shall expire of curiosity if she doesn't declare herself soon," said Agathon, the little tragic poet, who was sauntering through the Agora arm-in-arm with Alcibiades. "And I long to see her. It is said she is as tall as that Amazon who engaged Theseus in combat, and as dark as midnight."

"What interest have you in women?" asked Alcibiades with good-natured contempt. "You look like a girl yourself with your pretty face and pink cheeks."

"But I have the poet's eye for beauty. And I admire big dark women—if only with the eye of the artist that sits apart in my soul. If this Tiy is all rumour says she is she would make a fine heroine for a play. Surely you must be anxious to meet her yourself, Alcibiades, especially if there is any truth in that other rumour that she is here for the pleasure of men."

"My taste is not for big dark women," said Alcibiades

dryly. "Certainly not for women who for generations have been accustomed to treat men as if they were dirt underfoot. Our own hetæræ are nuisance enough with their whims and their tempers. Moreover, if she were as voluptuous as a Corinthian and as exquisite as an Ionian I'd avoid her, for I have no inclination to distract my mind with women—at present. It is known that the Spartan General Andromedes has been dispatched to Bœotia to make a final effort for the disposition of Panakton. We may hear now any day: whether Panakton is to be ours once more, or handed over to the Spartans to be bartered for Pylos."

"And what will be your policy if that happens?" Agathon took little interest in politics, but it gratified his vanity to be seen arm-in-arm with Alcibiades; and to hold the attention of that imperious young egoist one must ignore any subject but what happened to absorb him at the moment. He was a member of another club, more devoted to pleasure than politics, but it had embraced the cause of Alcibiades, and he was quite aware of what was brewing.

Alcibiades shrugged impatiently. "It will be the climax I have waited for for so long. I would that events moved more quickly. I have not the patience of Pericles."

"Nor his Olympian balance," thought the poet; but aloud he said ingratiatingly, "We have all admired your patience, dear Alcibiades—when a premature step would have been fatal. You have shown yourself to have Pericles' rare sense of drama—in waiting for the right moment to strike." He drew an affected little sigh. "How flat it would be if Andromedes arrived with Panakton in his hand and no conditions—after this long year of tension! And if Amphipolis——"

"Don't let your poet's imagination run away with you," interrupted Alcibiades scornfully. "Those ephors will do all they can think of to force us to break

the alliance. Well, so much the better for me. My only fear is they will delay too long—when did Sparta ever hurry?—and that she will effect an alliance with Argos before I am in a position to prevent it—what does that mean?"

A messenger, who had evidently arrived on horseback, was seen making his way to the Council Chamber through the throngs in the Agora.

"Pray Zeus!" muttered Alcibiades. "But it can be nothing else."

The same thought was in the mind of every one, and a deep silence pervaded the Agora until a herald emerged from the Chamber and cried in a loud voice:

"To the Pnyx within the hour! Andromedès, the envoy from Sparta to Thebes, arrives with news of Panakton!"

A moment later his voice was heard crying through the streets, and horsemen galloping with the summons to Piræus and the farms.

Alcibiades turned pale and set his teeth. The first great crisis in his life had come and his arrogant spirit flamed to meet it. He shook off Agathon and went at once to the Pnyx to secure a place near the Bema. When the President of the day arrived he held a short and meaning conference with him, and as the leading members of the Council climbed the hill in their robes of state and seated themselves on the flight of steps behind the Bema, they noted his flashing eyes and authoritative mien with a sigh of relief. He had won their confidence by his dignified behaviour of this past year, and by the increasing evidence of his genius for leadership whenever he spoke in the Ecclesia. Many of them were members of the Demos, elected by their fellows to temporary power, and the others, having lost faith in Nicias, welcomed an energetic, popular, and patriotic young leader in their time of need. It was Alcibiades' golden hour. Greatness, fame, and power were his to grasp.

X

It was by no means an embassy imposing in appearance for whom the Scythian Archers made a passage through the silent crowds on the Pnyx. Andromedès, a big fair man, like most of the Dorians, wore a short soiled grey mantle, and his feet were neither sandalled nor clean: his whole appearance that of a man dishevelled from a long hard ride over the mountains and the dusty roads of Hellas, and far too preoccupied to give a thought to his toilet. His companions were equally untidy and looked surly and ill at ease.

"Here come no bearers of good tidings," muttered Critias to Androcles. "And of course no Spartan would ask for time to wash his face."

"Dirty hogs!" But Androcles cast a glance of envy at Alcibiades, standing with folded arms beside the Bema and regarding the envoys with open scorn. What would he not give to be in his place? But his day would come!

The sacrifice was made, and an incongruous garland placed on the head of Andromedes. The envoy mounted the low steps of the Bema, made a slight inclination to the dignitaries rising above him and seated on either side, then turned to the expectant and by no means friendly faces of some six thousand men of Athens, who represented every walk of life.

He began haltingly.

"Athenians, you have waited long for the Spartans to fulfil their part of the Treaty, but you are well aware that the delay is no fault of ours——"

A hiss interrupted him, but he scowled and went on.

"I repeat, it is no fault of the Lacedemonians. Amphipolis was evacuated immediately, and we have sent envoy after envoy in the hope of inducing her to become a member of your confederacy once more. After all, she is an independent and powerful city, and we could do no more. You should have sent

a formidable army to compel her submission—— But we shall continue to do our best," he added hastily, as a low growl greeted his presumption in dictating to Athens.

"As for Panakton——" He hesitated a moment. "As for Panakton, we have remonstrated for a year with Bœotia, and when I left Sparta six days ago I had reason to hope that our efforts at last were to be crowned with success. I arrived in Thebes and my hopes were confirmed. We were told at once that the Four Councils of Bœotia had decided to surrender Panakton to us to do with as we would. Jubilant, we were escorted up through the mountains to Panakton—to find it—to find it, Men of Athens—razed to the ground."

The growl swelled to an incredulous and infuriated roar. It was some time before the President and the police could restore order and enable the Spartan to continue.

"But do not forget, Athenians, that Panakton has passed finally out of the hands of the Bœotians and that a fortress may quickly be rebuilt. You can be no more indignant than I was at that act of falseness. And I bring you the men who have for so long been prisoners in Bœotia, and for whom you have shown as much concern as for the fortress. I ask you, Men of Athens, nay I demand that you give us Pylos in exchange——"

For a moment every mouth hung open and then there was another furious roar. Many would have rushed forward and assaulted him but for the police, who were out in full force.

"The Treaty!" they shouted. "Yes, the Treaty! Perfidious Sparta! She never meant to keep a word of that Treaty."

The Spartan went on doggedly when he could make himself heard.

"All Lacedemonia believed that Pylos should have

been restored to us. We feel that we are within our rights in insisting upon it now—for Bœotia never would have surrendered Panakton to Athens. It is to Sparta they have surrendered, and Sparta feels she is in a position to make her own terms——"

But neither the President nor the police could restrain the Assembly further. Pandemonium broke loose, and the envoys were pushed unceremoniously up among the Prytanies at the back, where they would be safe from physical assault.

XI

ALCIBIADES took the vacant place on the Bema.

The tumult immediately subsided, the hoarse yells turned into cheers, and it was some moments before he attempted to speak.

He stood with folded arms, his head with its golden-bronze curls, gracefully garlanded, very high, his eagle glance raking that vast throng of his admirers; and he smiled faintly as he recalled his first appearance among them. He had been on his way to a quail fight, and seeing a crowd on the Pnyx curiosity had driven him up the hill to discover the cause. Wealthy citizens were being asked to subscribe to the next Panathenea; the public funds were low. He immediately offered a generous sum. The tremendous applause he received so agitated him that he forgot the quail hidden in his mantle, and it escaped, much to the hilarity of the spectators. His popularity dated from that hour—and perhaps his ambition. The applause had been intoxicating, and he wondered how he had lived for twenty-three years without it.

"Men of Athens," he began at length in his deep sonorous voice with its overtone of sweetness, "no wonder you are angry. I could hardly contain myself. Lies! Lies! Lies! Sparta could have sent an army to

Amphipolis and compelled her surrender by the threat of putting every man to the sword. But she had her prisoners back, and after the death of Brasidas was only too glad to be rid of Amphipolis; whether it returned to its old allegiance or not was a matter of complete indifference to her.

"As to Panakton—who ever heard from this Bema so weak and ridiculous an excuse for an act of treachery? The thirty members of the council, the five ephors, and the two kings of Sparta agreed, and recorded that agreement on stone, to the Treaty in its present form. At the same time they withdrew their demand for Pylos. What matter if the new ephors are discontented? The world of Hellas would be chaos indeed if each new government repudiated the treaties of the last. Those two newly elected ephors, Kleopulus and Xenares, have always hated Athens; they saw their chance to secure Pylos or break the alliance, and entered into a secret treaty with Bœotia——"

Here Andromedes began to shout but was howled down.

Alcibiades resumed. "I know what I am talking about, Athenians. You heard it as a rumour, but I know it to be a fact. Sparta entered deliberately into an alliance with Bœotia in the belief that she could force us to exchange Pylos for Panakton. We may have no hesitation in believing the envoys were appalled when they saw the destruction of the fort; treacherous themselves they had been innocent enough to expect faith in fellow-scoundrels. But they still had the impudence to come here and offer us a blackened ruin—in exchange for Pylos! We would admire their courage were not the stupidity and the impudence of the Spartans so familiar to all of us.

"I need not ask you what answer you will give to the—the—odious and insulting proposals of these envoys. You have already answered. They will be

sent home wiser men than they came, to remind Sparta once more of the indomitable spirit of Athens. We shall rebuild Panakton, and neither Bœotia nor Sparta will prevent us." (Wild cheering.)

He paused a moment and looked at them with an intimate smile that made every man present feel he was about to be taken into the confidence of Alcibiades.

"And now, Men of Athens, I shall say something here to-day that has long been in my mind; I have refrained hitherto because I thought it best to wait until publicly assured that Sparta had no intention of fulfilling her part of the Treaty. . . . Who is the real offender? To whom do we owe the weakest treaty ever made?" His voice rose to a pitch of indignation and his eyes looked like blue blazing suns. "Who induced you to send home those two hundred and ninety-two prisoners, the most important hostage ever held by a state at war, before Sparta had lifted a finger save to return a handful of Athenians she had managed to capture and hold? That Treaty could have been made as firm and enduring as one of those marble columns on the Acropolis and it is as full of holes as a sieve. The Spartans were so eager for peace that if we had sent them a man of character and determination, we could have asked for far more than we did and Sparta would have bowed to our will, however she might hesitate and delay. But Nicias is a weak good-natured man who has too many friends in Sparta——"

Here the cheering was tremendous, interspersed with hisses from the friends of Nicias. One man was led out with a broken nose.

"I am not questioning the integrity nor the good intentions of Nicias. He is well-meaning and patriotic and loves Athens, but he is a weak man of no foresight. He is too easily persuaded; his desire and his vain hope are to please everybody, and his love of peace blinds him to the future. He should have refused

to sign a treaty lacking the provision that Sparta should compel by force of arms if necessary the return of the cities for which we stipulated. He could have sat there for another six months and worn them out. We owe this insult to-day to Nicias, and I for one repudiate him and his party."

When the Athenians had cheered themselves hoarse he continued. "Two years ago, my countrymen, I was younger, and far less experienced in politics than I am to-day. My life, as you know, had been spent on the battlefield. It seemed to me then that Nicias was the hope of Athens, and I violated the traditions of my house and joined his party. He had—at times—led us adequately in war, and I believed, as so many of you did, that he alone could lead us to peace and security. He was an honourable, upright and dignified citizen, and I did not then suspect his weakness. I received my first blow when he persuaded you to return the prisoners to Sparta at once. Since that lamentable mistake I have been steadily disillusioned, but I have waited for this hour, here on the Bema, where so many of my ancestors and my great guardian and relative Pericles so often have stood and advised you in their wisdom, to declare my intention of returning to the great party to which my house was ever faithful, and to ask you to receive me into your ranks, and permit me to serve you. To believe in my devotion to you as to Athens——"

But his speech was never finished. The cheering could be heard in Piræus. Alcibiades rode home on the shoulders of two stout artisans, and followed by the entire Ecclesia; even the few remaining followers of Nicias dared not sneak off in an opposite direction.

The Spartan envoys were escorted to the frontier under a guard of Scythian Archers three deep.

XII

As Alcibiades' eyes roved over the Pnyx and the crowded Agora below during the moment before his boisterous exit, they happened to rest for a second on a house that stood on the adjoining hill. In that house was a high window and in the window was a face. He had only a glimpse of ivory and black before it was hastily withdrawn, but he was flattered that the Egyptian had listened to his speech and seen him first in his hour of triumph. Perhaps it was a good omen. He was not a slave to omens like Nicias, but he had a secret weakness for them nevertheless.

When he reached his house, after a lofty progress through the principal streets, he found the aula crowded with his friends and many others who aspired to that distinction. They cheered him as he entered, and then fell upon him with compliments and congratulations.

He was the First Citizen of Athens. The Hope of Hellas. Greater than Pericles, for his gifts of mind and person were greater. As great in peace as in war. He had acquitted himself magnificently. Not a word too much nor too little. He had revived the glory of the Bema. He had looked like Achilles as he stood there. Like Hector. Like a flaming Apollo. His voice was music and his words like strong wine. The Spartans had trembled and ground their teeth. His destiny was the greatest in the history of Hellas, and the name of Alcibiades would resound through the ages.

His head swam agreeably.

He glanced hastily over the throng and assured himself that Socrates was not present. It was a wonder he had not come with the intention of lowering the hero's self-esteem. By Zeus, he'd have no more of that. Pride was his birthright, and with the world at his feet he'd be damned if he ever succumbed to humility again as long as he lived.

He grew more haughty and arrogant every moment, but his flatterers applauded even that waxing mood. Only Aristophanes smiled and Androcles scowled. Finally he invited his club to dine with him that evening and dismissed them all with a wave of his hand. "I have a matter of grave importance to attend to," he said, "but you may all return this afternoon if you will."

He strode down the aula and disappeared into the thalamos. It was no vain boast that prompted him to get rid of his flatterers on the plea of pressing business. He had waited for this hour of public recognition to set in train a policy he had long had in mind. Argos must be rescued from the clutches of Sparta and enticed into the fold of Athens. He had friends and relatives in that important state and knew that she was drifting toward a renewal of the old alliance through fear of her isolated position among hostile states and of incurring the wrath of Sparta.

He took out his stilus, and unrolling a parchment, wrote a letter to Calliteles, the most influential of his relatives, bidding him assure the Argives of the friendship of Alcibiades, and persuade them to send an embassy to Athens immediately after his election, and ask to be accepted as allies of the Empire. They must on no account fail to bring Elean and Mantinean envoys with them. By that time he would be the head of the state and the request of all three would be granted. Meanwhile the Argives were to instruct their embassy in Sparta to find plausible excuses for delay; no difficult feat with the most dilatory state in Hellas.

This was his first act of statesmanship and he knew he had reason to be proud of it. But, indeed, so great was the energy of that "many-woven mind" it was only by the most violent self-restraint this past year he had attuned it to a proper patience. Only the vast issues at stake had enabled him to preserve a

passive exterior when he was chafing and seething within. But he had no little duplicity in his mental complexities, and even his intimate friends had rarely glimpsed the inner recesses of his mind. Critias was his political confidant, but to Aristophanes alone he was frank—at times ; and Aristophanes in return was almost as frank as Socrates. He knew better, however, than to emulate the philosopher's attempts to inculcate humility. Youth understands youth. Moreover, not only had he been fond of Alcibiades from boyhood, but his keen ironic mind promised itself much entertainment in watching this ambitious and able friend in action. If he lost his head and endangered the State—well, the time was not yet ; and Alcibiades was the man for Athens at present. No doubt of that.

XIII

When Alcibiades had summoned a trusted messenger and dispatched him with the metal cylinder containing the letter, he bethought himself of Hippareté. She must see him on this day of his triumph, and talk of it ever after to his son.

He opened the door, and then closed it hastily save for a crack through which he peered with amusement and interest.

Hippareté was not alone to-day. She was surrounded by six of her friends, all young women and either pretty or handsome. With one exception, he had never seen any of them before and he regarded them with the appreciation of a connoisseur. They wore chitons of red, yellow, blue or white, and their bright hair, of all shades from pale brown to black, was bound with a fillet, its abundance rolled into a high or low knot at the back of the head. They lolled on the marble benches in the sunshine, their attitudes graceful, their bare arms white and tapering. One

was absently strumming a lyre, but the faces of all were animated.

Hippareté herself wore a pink chiton, fashionably made with a long pleated skirt loosely girdled and a pointed over-garment reaching below the waist. And she was laughing as her husband had not heard her laugh since the first month of her marriage.

There was no code in Athens that forbade eavesdropping, and Alcibiades listened without a qualm. It was the first time he had ever been present, however invisible, at a gathering of secluded women, and with the quick change of interest that was one of his notable characteristics, he forgot that he was Alcibiades, potential First Citizen of Athens, and settled himself to enjoy a little comedy.

But in a few moments his godlike brow gathered in a frown. These women were criticizing their husbands.

One was such a sleepy oaf he had to be kicked out of bed in the morning. One was bad-tempered and told his wife to shut up when she begged to know what had gone on in the Ecclesia. One never opened his mouth at dinner. One boasted about himself all the time. Stingy. Fault-finding. Drunk after symposia. Unfaithful. Stupid. Exacting. Ridiculous. Weak. Overbearing. These were a few of the adjectives the disapproving listener heard applied to five of the leading younger citizens of Athens, several of them his friends.

His beautiful red-haired cousin, Agariste, of whom he had been briefly enamoured, was the most vicious in her diatribe, and he recalled the adjectives she had hurled at himself when his passion had cooled—coupled with threats!

And then they went on to more intimate details that made his bronze curls stand up and crackle. He had never imagined that decent women were capable of this primitive bald language. No hetæra, even in a rage, would be guilty of such dismantled Greek.

And the things they said about those men proud as Alcibiades himself of their accomplished manhood!

"By Zeus!" he muttered. "If their husbands were here with me those hussies would get a sound beating. And no doubt the poor deluded wretches think themselves blindly adored!"

He waited for Hippareté to express her opinion of himself, but he waited in vain. She had seen that door open and then close to a crack. She encouraged the others and laughed so heartily they failed to notice her reserve. She knew that no Athenian was above whipping his wife, and had no intention of suffering one more indignity. But she was agreeably amused nevertheless.

One alone raised her voice in defence of the male, Sostrata, wife of his cousin Axiochus.

"My husband is a dear," she said with warmth. "Attentive and kind. He talks to me at dinner and tells me all the news. He never drinks too much, nor raves over hetæræ and beautiful boys. He adores me and I him. He never leaves me in the evening except to go to his club, and if he stays too late he sleeps here in the house of Alcibiades, not to disturb me. He is a perfect husband, and I know there are others like him."

Alcibiades had much ado to keep from laughing aloud. He had put Axiochus to bed more than once, and they had revelled together in the house of Rhodippe. But it was true that he was fond of his wife and sometimes bored his friends by descanting upon her virtues, and those of his offspring.

The others immediately began to tease Sostrata, when suddenly one of them exclaimed: "Oh! Have you heard of this Egyptian?" And Alcibiades closed the door abruptly.

He had forgotten that face at the window, but it returned to him vividly. The phrase "as curious as a woman" was not invented until the Christians

invented Eve. It was the men who were curious and they passed down the heritage.

A slave was always awaiting his pleasure in the aula and he sent him for Saon.

The man entered and began to stammer his congratulations, but Alcibiades cut him short.

"We have a visitor here from Egypt," he said. "Go at once to her house and tell her that Alcibiades would extend the hospitality of Athens to one so distinguished and welcome, and begs she will attend his banquet to-night. As slaves know more than their masters I need give you no further directions."

And if she comes, he thought, will that mean she is a hetæra, or that, being an Egyptian, she flatters herself she is the equal even of the men of Athens?

Either way the prospect was amusing; and as it was still an hour before noon it occurred to him he would make a good impression by offering sacrifice in one of the temples.

XIV

Twenty-four young men were moving restlessly about the aula awaiting the coming of the Egyptian. She had signified a gracious acceptance, and as the purple mantle had fallen over Hymettus Alcibiades had sent Saon and a bodyguard of slaves to escort her in state through the streets of Athens. Even Alcibiades and his historic performance on the Bema were forgotten in this devouring curiosity and pleasurable anticipation.

Whom among them would she choose as a lover? For, hetæra or not, what woman could exist without a lover? Unless, indeed, she had come to Athens in search of a man for husband.

But they could think of no Athenian who would care to marry a woman steeped in the tradition of the inferiority of men. Aspasia, imperious, independent,

and as intellectual as the greatest of the Athenians, was tactful and feminine. But she was an Ionian, a Greek. This Egyptian must despise all men and would defer to none. No doubt were one of themselves infatuated enough to marry her and dared assert himself she would beat him. In Egypt it was the women who had the physical as well as the mental prowess, for the men were weaklings after generations of life in the house. They recalled their indignation at the tales of Herodotus and other travellers who had visited Egypt.

But to be her lover would be a new and amusing experience, and when the novelty was over a man could always pick a quarrel and walk out. They glanced enviously at Alcibiades. No doubt he would be the first.

They had all draped themselves in their finest and most becoming himatia, and looked forward to the moment when the slaves would place garlands on their heads and enhance their beauty. Alcibiades wore purple for the first time. It was a colour regarded as rather too pretentious by Athenians, who prided themselves upon an artistic simplicity and left purple to the Barbarians. But Alcibiades cared little for that. If he were neither King nor Tyrant he would shortly be almost as powerful as either, and his very soul had felt purple all this blessed day.

He glanced about the aula with deep satisfaction. It was not the custom in Athens to decorate this public outer court, and even that of Callias was bare save for a few statues; but Agatharchus—whom he had locked in the house until that rebellious painter had completed his task—had covered the walls behind the colonnade with magnificent presentments of peacocks; battle scenes had been discarded as fit for public porches only. There were rich hangings before the doors; and no aula in Miletus, Aspasia had assured him, could display more graceful statues, urns and

amphoræ on pedestals, carved marble chairs and benches, burnished palms. Above the pastas were the shields of his fathers.

In the centre of the court was a fountain, the head of Pan spouting water into a coloured marble basin. The altar, removed to a corner, was covered with cloth of gold; seldom lifted, for Alcibiades made his sacrifices in public, and Hippareté had set up an altar of her own in the hidden inner court.

Between the fluted Dorian pillars hung rows of bronze and silver lanterns, shedding a light as effective as the sun to display the splendour of the aula to the eyes of a stranger no doubt accustomed to somewhat of beauty even in a degenerate and subject state. If, however, reflected Alcibiades, those busy Egyptian women were indifferent to the refinements of life, so much more would this daughter of the Nile be impressed by the magnificence of her famous Athenian host.

He wondered if she would be a blemish on the picture, for he had been told that these masculine Egyptian women wore one serviceable garment the year round —still, unless his keen eyes had betrayed him, her face would be worth looking at.

"She comes! She comes!" It was the excited treble of Agathon, who also had been invited to the feast.

There was a flare of torches in the street. The porter threw open the double doors at the end of the short passage leading to the aula, and Saon announced in a loud voice:

"The Lady Tiy, daughter of the Lady Setepeura, O Alcibiades, son of Cleinias," and Alcibiades went forward with a smile and a graceful gesture of welcome while the others held their breath.

It was a dazzling and astonishing figure that stood for a moment at the entrance of the aula. As tall as Alcibiades himself and as straight of line but less gracefully built, the Egyptian wore a black garment em-

broidered with gold hieroglyphics that began just above the waistline and tapered to the ankles; so closely fitting it might have been no more than an extra cuticle. It was supported from the shoulders by two narrow bands. Her small breasts were exposed, but almost hidden by a deep collar of gold links studded with scarabs. Serpentine bracelets clasped her upper arms, wrists, and ankles. On her imperious head, revealing the small flat ears, was a high sloping golden casque surmounted by twin cobras, their heads viciously thrust forward. Her black hair, in at least a hundred narrow plaits, hung far below her waist.

"Great Zeus!" muttered Critias. "Does she flatter herself that she is some old Queen of the Nile released by Pluto—that she wears their insignia? Would she dare wear that head-dress in the presence of a Persian Satrap?"

"Look at her face," whispered Charmides. "Let her wear serpents all over her if she likes. But she's too big for my taste."

It was a face whose like had never before been seen in Hellas, but whether beautiful or not would be a matter for fierce discussion. The large black eyes, oval in shape, their length extended by dark pigment, were set disconcertingly far apart. The nose, long, narrow, dominating, was as high at the base as a Greek's, the nostrils both delicate and hard. In the gleaming flawless ivory of her face was set a mouth, long, sinuous, violently red, and as expressionless as the rest of that strange countenance. She looked, indeed, more like an idol whose place was on a pedestal in a temple than a living woman.

Every man in the room, even Charmides, felt a sensation of antagonism, although their trained appreciation of beauty in any form compelled a certain admiration of this perfect and no doubt typical product of the Nile. She dominated even Alcibiades, who, as he stood before her murmuring his graceful

nothings, felt as if he had diminished two inches in stature.

When she spoke the antagonism suffered increase, for her voice was deep and authoritative.

"You have honoured me by asking me to your house, O Alcibiades," she said, "and I have seen fit to pay you homage by wearing the head-dress of my great ancestress Tiy, Queen of Amenhotep III and mother of the immortal Akhnaton,—which is one of the treasures of my house. Would that I could visit Athens as Queen of Egypt, but, alas, the glory of my house departed even before the last of the Pharaohs, and I come only as a humble visitor to view the beauties of your city and to meet its great men."

"I knew it!" said Critias. "She's after our armies and treasure. But she'll have a rude awakening. If ever we fight Persia again it will not be for a woman three inches too tall."

"We are deeply honoured, O Tiy," replied Alcibiades, who had much ado to keep dryness out of his tones. "I will lead you to the andron and there present my friends to you; they have been as eager as I to meet you."

There was no precedent, and he had not the least idea what ceremony might be involved in leading a woman of rank to the banquet; but he was never at a loss and held out his hand tentatively. She placed her own upon it and Alcibiades drew a sigh of relief that instinct had guided him aright.

That hand, too, was like polished ivory, long and firm, and almost square at the tips. It, too, expressed the power that radiated almost visibly from that mighty woman. He looked at it without favour; his taste was for small tapering fingers expert in caress. But the nails, delicately stained with henna, were polished, and so were those of her strong arched feet in their golden sandals.

As her garment fitted her ankles as tightly as it

embraced her straight manly hips, the men had been whispering she would take at least half an hour to shuffle her way to the andron ; but it was immediately evident the material was elastic, for she moved her long legs as freely as any Greek in his chiton. They gloomily reflected she was not in the least likely to court hindrance of any sort.

Alcibiades had had a thronos or chair of state taken to the andron, but his intention had been to ask her if she would prefer to recline. In a moment, however, he had decided that highly as she might esteem herself, in so far she should not be granted equality with Athenians.

He planted her firmly in the thronos, and the others passed before her as he introduced them impressively, adding to each name that of the father—to this woman who if she owed her being to a father ignored his existence. That announcement of Saon, dictated by herself, had stirred his ire.

She inclined her head regally to each of these proud men of Athens, without relaxing the immobility of her face ; but when the ceremony was over she turned to Alcibiades with a smile that made her lips curve and curl over dazzling teeth, and instantly she was no longer a resurrected queen but a beautiful woman.

"I beg you will sit beside me, O Alcibiades," she said, and even her voice had softened, although still authoritative. "I am sure you will give me that pleasure."

Alcibiades almost forgot himself and scowled. "But we always recline," he stammered. "Ah—oh——"

"Then I, too, will recline." She half rose, and Alcibiades turned to a slave precipitately. "Bring another chair," he commanded, and his eyes flashed over the company daring them to smile.

But they were not in a smiling mood ; they believed their evening was ruined. They had anticipated much

amusement in treating this Egyptian to their naughtiest stories, jokes, and songs, teaching her a lesson for presuming to equality with man; but she had made them feel like little boys who'd not dare open their mouths.

"She looks as massive as one of her pyramids," grumbled Callias, his large amiable white face almost flabby with depression. "There is no place in Athens for such a woman. Let us hope she has wit enough to discover that for herself, and go back to the things that call themselves men."

"But she must see the difference," said Charmides anxiously, and selecting a couch at the far end of the room. "Agathon may look no better than they, and Aristophanes is no beauty with that head bald before his time, but the other men here to-night are the tallest and handsomest in Athens, and Alcibiades has never looked so glorious as in that purple mantle."

Androcles laughed. "Alcibiades looks as if he had been stood in a corner with his face to the wall. Imagine his sensations at being told to do a thing and then doing it!"

"Yes," said Aristophanes, "that haughty crest of his is visibly lower, and he looks as sulky as he dares. But he will soon recover himself or I know not Alcibiades."

And in a moment so it was. Humour routed Alcibiades' temper and he was ever adaptable. He seated himself beside the Egyptian and drew himself up until he looked like a king on his throne graciously permitting his consort to share the honours of the moment. And after all, he reflected, with boyish satisfaction, he was a good inch taller than she—without that helmet. He disliked her intensely, but there was no hint of it in his manner as he named the gods and goddesses disporting themselves on the walls and asked her to correct him if he misnamed her own.

"Do you still worship Ra?" he asked politely, and

Acc No 21516

continued vaguely, "Isis—Osiris——" Then hastily reflecting that he may have invited a learned discourse, he added with a smile: "I hear you have brought an army of black cats with you. They have been seen disporting themselves on the roof of your house. There are few cats in Athens. We rely on the weasel to exterminate our mice. But as cats are sacred in Egypt I suppose you put them to no such vile use?" (Gods! What intellectual conversation! Were Aspasia dead I'd invoke her shade.)

She smiled at him once more although her eyes were watchful. "I fancy there is little variety in the appetite of cats, sacred or not. We have more cats than slaves in Egypt and mice do not trouble us." She changed the subject abruptly. "I listened to your oration this morning. You were very insulting and the Spartans were very angry. Why are you so confident that this singular treatment of an embassy from a friendly state will not lead to a renewal of the war?"

"Not yet at all events," he replied, and said no more. He had no intention of discussing politics with her.

"Your avowal to the Athenians, I am told, means that you are regarded henceforth as their leader, a position of great power. They were ready to prostrate themselves at your feet and kiss the hem of your mantle."

Now what is she leading up to? he thought uneasily, but he answered with a smile: "You know the Athenians very little, O Tiy, if you imagine them grovelling at the feet of Zeus himself. I suppose it is impossible for you to realize their intense pride and independence—so different are the men of your country."

"Our women are quite as proud and independent as your men," she replied dryly. "It is merely the reverse of the shield. Even Persia cannot subdue our

spirit, and for many years now her yoke has been light."

"You never think of rebelling?" he asked irresistibly, although it was a mistake in tactics. But to his surprise she shook her head.

"No. We are wealthy and happy, and if we were once more an independent state no doubt other states would attack us. We have had enough of war in the past! If men were dominant as of old they would have defied Persia long before this, and we be more miserable than our slaves to-day. But women have more wisdom, as the women of Egypt have proved."

"How in the name of Zeus," cried Alcibiades nettled, "did women ever attain to power? They ruled here before Cecrops, and not long since in Sparta. What is their secret?"

"It is a secret only to the blind. Men became insufferable in their tyranny and women awoke to a sense of their indignities. Gradually—it took many long years—they attained first to equality and then to dominance. Now, however——" Her heavy brows drew together in a frown and her lips for a moment were straight and thin.

Alcibiades looked at her for the first time with pleasure. "Something alarms you. All is not as well in Egypt as you would have me believe."

"Not alarm," she said coldly. "We shall have trouble, but we know how to deal with it. Even as women once rebelled, so are our men beginning to show signs of revolt. But, wiser than your women before Cecrops, we shall act before it is too late. They have dared to hold secret meetings and make wild speeches denouncing the tyranny of women, but our spies keep us informed and we descend upon them with whips and drive them home. For that reason I brought my young brother with me. He even dared to talk to ME about the 'rights of men'! I have ceased to

beat him, for he is taller and stronger than most of our men, and thought it best to divert his mind. I may marry him here in Athens, and dower him generously."

Alcibiades burst into uncontrollable laughter. "You will pardon me," he said, when he could speak. "But as you talked I could have sworn the world was standing on its head. It was like listening to a comedy of Aristophanes'."

Her high cheek bones showed a spot of burning scarlet and she looked at him with a scorn that matched his own. "It is merely that you Athenians have neither the knowledge nor the imagination to comprehend any civilization but your own," she said cuttingly, and Alcibiades flushed in his turn.

"No imagination?" he asked haughtily. "Where in all the world have men—or *women!*—displayed the rich and measureless imagination of the Athenians? Do you know aught of our great and famous poets, of our philosophers who have read the mysteries of nature and of man? Have you not seen the proud accomplishments of our architects and sculptors? What have you in your woman's state to compare with the least of them?"

"What have other states? States ruled by men? Persia—Carthage—even Syracuse? Your other states of Hellas? For some strange reason, known only to your gods, there has been a mighty flowering of genius in this state alone. If women had continued in power it must have been the same; *their* genius would have flowered to the renown of Athens. And in Egypt there have been great—and forgotten—civilizations that may have witnessed just such an outburst of genius, and under the domination of women. War—always war—buried them under the sands of the desert as war will bury this proud civilization of yours, and its very name be forgotten."

"Are you here to prophesy evil for Athens?" And

nothing would have given him more pleasure than to plant his fist in her face.

"Do not nations rise but to fall again? Even as the waves on the shore? My great ancestor Akhnaton knew of what he spoke: only when men have learned the wisdom to cease from war will one civilization cease to succeed another and the hopes of man go down in futility."

"'All things give place; nothing is permanent,' said Heracles. And according to Hesiod, 'The earth is full of woes and full of woes the sea.'" He strove to speak lightly, remembering he was host to this infernally depressing woman. "But I suppose you know nothing of our poets."

"I have read your Æschylus," she said coolly, "and recall the line: 'When a man is hastening to his ruin the gods help him on.'"

He changed the subject hastily. "I noted one weak point in your argument a moment ago. You blame the short-sighted tyranny of men for the revolt and ultimate victory of women. It would appear that history teaches you nothing, for you are now driving the men to rebel."

"We are not tyrannous, we are merely dominant. It is necessary that one sex should look after the house and children, and with us it happens to be men instead of women. We treat them kindly so long as they do as they are told. What have you to say? You punish wives, do you not, when they are insubordinate?"

"Nevertheless, you have given them cause for rebellion. You may not beat and kick them about, but it is evident they conceive themselves to be unjustly treated and regard you as tyrants—— But we must not quarrel to-night, and here comes the wine. For which the gods be thanked," he muttered almost audibly.

The delicate repast of shellfish, birds, vegetables,

honey-cakes and fruit was over ; the slaves had taken out the little tables and brought them in again set with cups and goblets. The brows of the men, who had been carrying on a low desultory conversation, cleared as the garlands were placed on their heads, and they dipped generously into the krater.

Alcibiades, too, had been garlanded, but the slave had looked askance at the woman as he handed the second of the chaplets to his master. Alcibiades turned to her hesitatingly.

"I do not know—I hardly think this wreath would consort with the snakes——"

Her hand darted out and took possession of the garland. "I will wear it on my wrist," she said graciously. "And I am grateful for the wine, for I am very thirsty." She raised the goblet to her lips and drained it to the dregs ; the men for the first time regarding her with unreserved admiration.

She made a slight grimace. "It is weak," she said, "and has an odd taste."

"It is one part water to two of wine, and we like the flavour of resin. Each country has its own customs, O Tiy."

"Pardon my criticism, but——" she shrugged slightly. "All things are different in Athens, are they not ? You must permit me to remark upon them, for I find these differences remarkably interesting."

"We are the most critical people in the world and welcome criticism in others. Will you tell me, O Tiy, where you learned to speak Attic Greek ? "

"Many of us speak it. Others only the dialects learned from the traders that come to us from all parts of your Empire. You forget that your historians and sophists have visited us from time to time. Some we have induced to remain for a year or more. Your sophists are very willing to impart their knowledge for hire. We treat them well, for although we may

not be learned we respect knowledge, and your language is the most beautiful in the world."

Her first compliment, thought Alcibiades ; and then reflected that never before had he spent an hour in a woman's company without being smothered in roses. But he dismissed a pang of resentment. Naturally these amazonian Egyptians knew naught of the arts and graces of their sex.

Flute girls clad scantily in gauze had entered with the wine, and the men, stimulated out of both awe and depression, presently burst into a drinking song, the most ribald they knew. But the face of the Egyptian was as impassive as if it were of ivory set with jewels. When the song was over, and the girls had seated themselves on the couches, permitting the men to caress them, she turned once more to her host.

"At our banquets we sometimes toy with pretty youths," she said. "And I have heard that, too, is not unknown in Athens. But whatever Persia may have done she has not imposed her corruptions upon us—one more reason for the dominance of woman. But I see that conversation is at an end for the night, and if you will summon your slaves I shall return to my house."

She rose slowly to her feet like a long snake uncoiling. And then she raised her voice.

"You will all dine at my house two nights hence," she announced in the deep commanding voice of a general on the battlefield. "I would have you meet my brother Setamon."

In the plaintive silence that followed she extended her hand to Alcibiades, who could do no less than place his own under it and lead her from the room and to the door of his house.

When he burst into the andron a moment later, his face scarlet, he seized a krater in both hands. "Nothing less will suffice me!" he shouted. "Let us all get drunker than we have ever been in our lives, and then

go out and raid the house of Nicias and steal his silver ! ”

But Aristophanes locked the door and hid the key in a vase. They rioted far into the night, but safe from the eyes of Alcibiades' admirers and enemies.

XV

“ ALCIBIADES,” said Critias on the following day as they left the gymnasium where they had been exercising, and strolled toward the Ilissus, “ we must draw up a list of your enemies and endeavour to anticipate any course they may take.”

“ I saw Hyperbolus making faces at me in the Ecclesia yesterday, but who are the others ? I never worry about enemies. What harm can they do me now ? ”

“ None at the moment, but be sure they will work unceasingly to ruin you. And you know the fickleness of Athenians. We must take each of those men in turn and weigh his power.”

Alcibiades shrugged, but he had a great respect for Critias' opinion. “ Very well,” he said, “ but let us lie down in the shade.”

He threw himself on the ground under a plane tree by the river, and clasped his hands behind his head. Critias sat opposite embracing his knees, his hard, keen, rather cruel face as serious as if he followed the sun to bed every evening instead of carousing until midnight. But he, too, began the day with boiled cabbage.

“ We will take Hyperbolus first,” he said.

“ Lamp-makers are as much out of fashion as tanners,” interrupted Alcibiades flippantly.

“ True, but there are many lamp-makers and tanners who hate the Eupatridæ, although they would rather follow Nicias the Moderate-Oligarch than see Alcibiades

at the head of the Demos. They know they are powerless at present, but they will never forget that for nearly seven years one of their number ruled in Athens, exemplifying for the first time the true power of the Demos. And now the haughtiest member of the Eupatridæ has wrested the power from them——"

"Yes, and intends to keep it. Those extremists are insignificant in number. The great body of the Demos is for me."

"At present. But Hyperbolus has formed some thirty of those men into a club and will keep them inflamed. He is bitterly resentful, for he had looked forward to a long period of power after Nicias was got rid of, no doubt with a view to dipping his fingers into the revenues of the State. Be sure he will watch you like a weasel at a mouse hole, and pounce on every mistake."

"To Pluto with him and his rabble! What does he expect me to do? Climb the Acropolis some dark night with my slaves and make off with the treasure?"

"Not so far from it. I have a spy in that club, and Hyperbolus makes much of your extravagance in the liturgies, in the furnishing of your house, in your expensive racing stud. He pretends to know to the last drachma the extent of your fortune, and asserts that you have already spent half of all you inherited."

"Perhaps he is right, but I know where to get more when I want it."

"Ah?" Critias was alert with curiosity. "Where may that be?"

"All in good time. Go on with my enemies."

"There are Nicias and his followers. Men of education and resource, of long experience in every political trick. They too will watch and wait. Already they are at work among the clubs that have given us their adherence this last year."

"Have you noticed any defections?" asked Alcibiades frowning.

"Not yet, but jealousy is the mental itch, and seldom quiescent. Novelty, love of change and excitement, make ready disciples, but when the object of enthusiasm reaches the apex and looks down he becomes the envy of all men, and in some minds envy is of a quality that may easily be nursed into jealous hatred."

"True. Human nature is a nasty mess. No wonder Pericles cultivated Olympianism. He'd have been the greatest cynic in Athens otherwise. Olympianism is not for me, and I suppose I'll end as a cynic. But not yet! I find life too full of promise at present."

"Well, keep your eyes open. And remember we did not win over all those clubs of young men. There is that of Euphiletus, to which my brilliant young cousin Andokides belongs. They are as ambitious as you are and resent your very existence."

"Andokides is not yet twenty and Euphiletus' abilities are second-rate," said Alcibiades contemptuously. "The Athenians know it. Who cares whether they hate me or not? I feel but complimented at the envy and hatred of such men."

"Both are rich and resourceful, however, and have their following. And remember Euphiletus is intimate with two of the older Oligarchs second only to Nicias in following: Thessalus, son of Kimon, whose hatred of your house is hereditary, and Antiphon, who may, like all sophists, be forbidden the Bema, but has the cleverest pen in Athens, not even excepting the comic poets. He hates you and your house on principle, for he has never forgiven the ostracism of Thucydides son of Melisias, and the triumph of Pericles. He'll lampoon you and hold you up to ridicule if you give him the opportunity. And then there is Phæax——"

"Phæax is another second-rater."

"He is the head of his club; and when you call men second-rate you are comparing them with yourself. You may be a genius, but other men's abilities

are not to be despised. Second-rate men have risen to power before this, and second-rate men thwarted and worried Pericles all his life. It is beneath your intelligence to underrate your enemies."

"I don't underrate them. I'd gladly bind the lot of them together with thongs and throw them into the middle of the Ægean Sea. Of course they will give me trouble.—But no! I'd not get rid of them if I could. What would life be without enemies? All spice would go out of it. What greater satisfaction than to kick them from under and leap to the top while they are cursing? I thought of Antiphon and Phæax yesterday as those men were cheering me in the Ecclesia. I hope every one of my enemies was there."

"Whether there or not, they are gnawing their fingernails to-day. They are impotent at present, but be sure they are watching for their chance."

"More weasels at the mousehole. Well, this mouse has teeth of iron and claws of brass, and is a match for all the vermin in Athens. You well know that, Critias, or you would not be my right-hand man!"

Critias passed over the insinuation. "I know that you are the ablest Greek of your time, but I know also that you are the most reckless, the most arrogant, the most self-willed, and the most uncertain. Zeus only knows what you will do next. But I shall watch your enemies, if you do not, and when I report danger you must act at once."

"Oh, be sure I shall do that. And one thing above all others gives me a sense of security. They know you are my friend and that you have eyes in the back of your head." He gave Critias the frank and affectionate smile that roused the passionate loyalty of his friends, and was not without its effect upon Critias. "Now, let us take a nap, soothed by the murmur of the Ilissus. Neither of us had much sleep last night."

XVI

THE men, one and all, had vowed that did the gods themselves descend from Olympus and order them to go to the house of the Egyptian they would refuse to obey ; but curiosity had routed their antagonism, and on the evening appointed they might have been seen wending their way defiantly to the low hill near the Pnyx. Alcibiades had persuaded himself that to ignore her invitation would not only be an act of unparalleled rudeness on the part of the First Citizen of a state famous for its courteous treatment of strangers, but might be interpreted as a token of cowardice. Never should it be said that Alcibiades feared a woman.

Theodoté, Nemea, Rhodippe and other sirens had clamoured to be taken, for the uninvited often turned up at a banquet ; but their patrons were not yet prepared to inflict so drastic an insult, although the more cynical among them were tempted. They had recovered all their assurance, however, and vowed that never would they be cowed by her again. She might be the descendant of Pharaohs, but more than one of them had the blood of kings in their veins, to say nothing of heroes and gods. Once more they had dressed themselves in their finest himatia, and held their heads high.

They had met at the house of Alcibiades and drunk each a cup of wine, less diluted than usual. Thus fortified, and supported by one another, they strode proudly to the presence of one, who, whatever her position in Egypt, was nothing but a woman after all.

The immense Nubian slave stood at the door. The aula was bare and faintly illumined. It was deserted save for at least twenty prowling cats and another black slave, who salaamed and motioned to the guests to follow him.

It was the custom in Athens for the host to meet

his guests at the entrance of his house, but evidently this Egyptian was governed by no laws but her own.

Still another slave threw open the door of the andron, and they entered upon a scene so charming they forgot resentment and gave utterance to quick ecstatic cries of pleasure.

The walls were hung with a thin shimmering material, golden in colour, and the pillars festooned with thousands of ribbons, both delicate and vivid, and subtly harmonious. Over all was a canopy painted with flowers, and birds in eager flight. There were no couches, but twenty-six arm-chairs richly cushioned. Great lapis-lazuli bowls of wild flowers stood in the corners of the room and gave forth a perfume that owed little to nature. On a high pedestal carved into a mass of writhing cobra was a bronze figure of Apis, the sacred bull of Egypt; but otherwise the scene was one of exquisite delicacy and beauty. The little tables, of ebony and electrum, were laden with gold and crystal, and the room was a blaze of light.

Tiy was clad much as she had been on her first appearance, save that the dress was of a deep wine-red studded with jewels, and her head uncovered but for a heavy gold net that hung low on either side. The hair had been unbraided and arranged in three enormous masses, two just above her shoulders, the other at the back. Her eyes under the broad low forehead and heavy eyebrows were as expressionless as ever, but she had laid aside her royal manner, and greeted her guests graciously, naming each correctly, although at no pains to recall his immediate descent.

And then she presented them to her brother, a tall youth who stood at her side. He resembled her in feature, but his mouth was rebellious and his eyes sulky. His only garment was a white skirt embroidered with black hieroglyphics. He wore no jewels and his long hair hung loose on his shoulders.

He looked with open envy at the proud bearing of

the Athenians and their gracefully worn mantles, and his eyes dwelt on Alcibiades—in ceremonial white—who faced his sister with such kingly assurance. He had seen Satraps quail before his mother, and never before had he seen a man hold up his head in the presence of Tiy.

His manners were awkward, and it was plain he was unused to society, but once or twice his sullen mouth relaxed and he smiled winningly.

Callias threw a friendly arm over his shoulder. "Come and sit by me," he whispered. "We are willing to listen to all your troubles——" But an ivory arm shot out.

"Setamon," said his guardian sternly, "you will sit by Axiochus, who is the cousin of my first host in Athens." And the boy, although he scowled, did as he was told.

She motioned to Alcibiades to take the chair beside her, and the others seated themselves as they listed, their one concern now for their dinner. The Athenians were small eaters, but extremely fastidious. For meat they cared little, but fish, vegetables, and birds must be served with savoury sauces and cooked to a turn. No doubt the Egyptians lived on crocodiles and bulls—but no, those were sacred. Probably great chunks of cow would be served, and they would all fall asleep before the wine.

But it was soon apparent that the memory of this Egyptian was tenacious for more than names, and that to a certain extent she was willing to conform to the customs of Athens. The viands were similar to those served at the house of Alcibiades, although more abundant. Eels cooked with spices were succeeded by quail, lobster and oysters, and the vegetables were properly cooked. The dishes were garnished with flowers, and fruit and bread were served with every course.

The spirits of the guests soared steadily, and Axiochus,

a fair jovial man with laughing eyes, soon had Setamon at his ease, albeit exciting the jealousy of that down-trodden youth with his descriptions of the life of Athenian boys in the palæstra.

"Come with me to-morrow," he said kindly, "and I will take you to the stadium and introduce you to the young men who are practising for Olympia. You will enjoy looking on at the discus-throwing and the long running jump."

"If she will let me go out," mumbled the boy. "I've not crossed the threshold since I came."

"What? And you came to see Athens?"

"I came because she brought me. And in Egypt the men do as they are told—by women. How you must despise us?"

"Ah—well—different countries, different customs—of course. But this is Athens. Visitors always conform to our customs. And after all you are nearly a man—how old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"At eighteen our boys come of age and enter the army. Surely if you insist you can come forth with me to-morrow when I call for you?"

"Insist! You don't know her. But I'll not ask her. I'll go with you if I have to climb over the roof. It won't be the first time I've done it. Don't think we are all as mean-spirited as you have heard. Many, many of us have defied those women and given them trouble. They've the best of us so far, but we are talking over more and more of the young men—the older ones are too cowed and tired to be of any use—and we'll get the best of those women in our turn."

"Well—I hope so. . . . After all, men are men. Yours is a most unnatural state of affairs."

"They say that of yours. That women were born to rule and that men's states are degenerate. They will yield us nothing—not even permission to call

ourselves sons of fathers instead of mothers. Their only reply is a laugh or a box on the ear."

"Would you not like to live amongst us?" asked Axiochus sympathetically; he felt both bewildered and indignant, and a strong inclination to rescue this young man from a fate whose only parallel was that of a freeman captured by the enemy and sold into slavery. "Your sister told Alcibiades," he continued, "that she thought of marrying you in Athens."

"Oh! Ha! She has spoken to me of that! But I know what it means. She would keep me out of Egypt, where I have too much influence over other young men. She is clever—that woman! She knows that if she is the daughter of Setepeura I am her son. No, I'll not be got rid of. I'll learn all I can in Athens, and go back and make it hot for those women—herself included."

"But just think!" The Athenian's face beamed with amusement. "If you stayed here and married you could tyrannize over your wife and slaves! You would feel like one of us in no time."

But the boy was no humorist. He shook his head. "That would not content me. I want to work for the freedom of man. That may take many years, but meanwhile we can shake their hateful smugness and give them wakeful nights. They know that what has been may come again."

"But we have been given to understand that your sister intends to live here in Athens." Axiochus, as curious as all Athenians, thought this a good opportunity to find out just what that formidable woman was up to. "Surely you will remain with her."

"Oh, I shall remain gladly—for a time. I have much to learn, and I hope to feel more of a man after I have lived among men. But how long will that be? She takes no one into her confidence. Me least of all."

"There is a rumour that she has come to ask our aid in revolting against Persia; but something she said the night before last to Alcibiades disabused us of that idea."

Setamon laughed. "That is not it! Those women know where they are with the Persians. They'd never invite in the Athenians to teach their men new ways. No, it is not that, whatever it is."

Axiochus hemmed. He approached a delicate subject. "It is even said—some gossip in Piræus started the rumour—that she came to join the ranks of the hetæræ, in order to live a freer life—with real men."

The boy raised his eyebrows. "Hetæræ? What is that?"

"We have a class of women here, very beautiful, very clever, well educated, some of them Athenians, others Metics, many from foreign states—companions of men, who go about freely and do as they will. Some are the companion of one man only, others more independent. Their houses are very gay and delightful; they are amusing and good-tempered, and able to talk on many subjects. Our wives and daughters are ignorant and live in the strictest seclusion—that is to say, most of them. A few of us send our wives to Aspasia to be educated, but not many. These women I speak of are kept by our leading citizens, but allowed the greatest liberty. Have I made myself clear?" He felt as embarrassed as if enlightening the innocence of a maiden.

"Not quite. My sister, of course, will lead a free life, and I have heard her say she has not the slightest wish to know the women of Athens. But she has great wealth. Why should any man 'keep' her?"

"Just so. But she might choose to have lovers. One or many."

Setamon shook his head. "Women in Egypt have lovers—miserable painted things! No decent man would speak to them. But not Tiy. Who would dare suggest it to her? She'd throw him to the crocodiles. And I doubt if she would so far condescend even to an Athenian—wonderful as you are. Women

in love often make fools of themselves, even in Egypt. Not Tiy ! ”

“ But a woman like that—so beautiful—so—ahem—exuberant with life—surely she must have need of a lover ? ”

“ If she had she’d merely use some man for a night, and then forbid him ever to enter her presence again. But I’ve seen no sign of it. For that matter we always quarrel, and about one thing only. I know of nothing on earth I am so little interested in as Tiy, other than as a tyrannical woman who keeps me in subjection.”

There was nothing to be learned here, and Axiochus permitted Charmides to take his turn at entertaining the youth.

XVII

A STRING band entered the andron as the tables were carried out. Four girls in flowing transparent robes with coloured borders seated themselves at the lower end of the room, and the guests were asked to move the chairs against the wall. The instruments carried by the musicians were the harp, the lute, two in number, and a large standing lyre with eight strings. Without glancing at the Athenians, whose eyes were fixed on them avidly, they began at once to play, and it was manifest that here were no amateurs but accomplished performers.

The tables were brought in laden with flowers. Each guest was given a golden bowl and the wine was served from a large alabaster krater richly carved. After a long prelude the girls began to sing, and, to the astonishment of the Athenians, not in Egyptian but in Greek, although the words were new to them.

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of heaven,
O living Aton, Beginning of life !
When thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven
Thou fillest every land with Thy beauty ;
For Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high over the earth ;
Thy rays they encompass the lands, even all Thou hast made.
Thou art Ra, and Thou hast carried them all away captive.
Thou bindest them by Thy love.

There were one hundred and thirty-three lines, all chanted in a soft low monotone charged with adoration, by those girls who never looked at the Athenians.

"This is a sweet revenge she takes on us for that drinking-song we gave her," muttered Aristophanes. "But perhaps it is the kindly custom in Egypt to lull the guests to sleep—or to save the wine."

The Athenians hardly knew whether to be amused or angry. They longed for the accustomed couch, and before the end of that interminable song moved restlessly. Callias yawned openly.

Alcibiades sat with eyes downcast and lowering brow. Never had he passed so detestable an evening. Tiy had discoursed for an hour and a quarter on the virtues of the woman's state, and laughed his heated protests to scorn. It was the first time he had encountered a man's mind in a woman's cranium, and the discovery that such a thing could be irritated him beyond measure. The hetæræ were often brilliant, but they made no man feel inferior. Aspasia had a way of subtly flattering a man's intellect even while exercising her own. There grew in him a desire to conquer this woman, to make her love him, even as other women had loved him with no effort on his part, and then humiliate her to the dust.

The guests drew a long sigh as the song ended, and cherished the hope that a symposium would follow, or that at least they would be invited to indulge in one of their own drinking-songs. Critias had written a new one, comparatively decent.

But when the voices of the girls ceased Tiy rose to her feet.

"You have heard a song written to my great ancestor Akhnaton," she said. "I will now recite to you a hymn written by him. He believed in but one God, and hoped to found a new religion, but it perished with him. Only his descendants remember aught of it, and that only as one remembers a dream; but we hope

that when the world is older and has emerged from darkness into light, it will return to this great vision of an old King of the Nile."

And she began to recite in her deep rich voice.

The world is in darkness like the dead. Every lion cometh forth from his den. All serpents sting. Darkness reigns.
When Thou risest in the horizon the darkness is banished. Then in all the world they do their work.
All trees and plants flourish. The birds flutter in their marshes. All sheep dance upon their feet.
The ships sail up-stream and down-stream alike. The fish in the river leap up before Thee; and Thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.
How manifold are all Thy works! Thou didst create the earth according to Thy desire . . . men . . . all cattle . . . all that are upon the earth.
Thou hast set a Nile in heaven that it may fall down for them, making floods upon the mountains . . . and watering their fields. The Nile in heaven is for the service of the strangers, and for the cattle of every land.
Thou makest the seasons. . . . Thou hast made the distant heavens in order to rise therein . . . dawning shines afar off, and returning.
The world is in Thy hand, even as Thou hast made them. When Thou hast risen they live; when Thou settest they die. By Thee man liveth.

She sat down to polite applause but deep resentment. They forgot they were the young intellectuals of Hellas with a light disdain for ancient superstitions, and felt their gods had been outraged—or threatened. It would have given them a profound satisfaction to watch her drink hemlock. They wondered how soon it would be decent to leave. The gods be thanked, she served good Chian wine, and they consoled themselves with its abundance.

She turned to Alcibiades.

"Did you ever hear anything as beautiful?" she asked; and her smile was a trifle malicious.

"As your voice? Never, O Tiy. And we all appreciate the compliment you have paid us in translating both songs into Greek. Did you do it yourself?"

"I have an old scholar in my household. He came

to us when my mother was young—he was taken prisoner by the Persians when Xerxes invaded your country ; and although the time came when we would have permitted him to depart, he was blind then and accustomed to us, who had always treated him kindly."

" This is not he then ? " asked Alcibiades insolently, and indicating a hideous black dwarf who sat at her feet.

Her eyes flashed, but she prodded the dwarf with her sandal and motioned to the musicians.

They struck up a lively tune, and the dwarf ran to the middle of the room and began to caper. He wore a short red tunic and was covered with metal trinkets that tinkled sweetly as he danced. He was as lively as a Copaic eel, and his postures and gyrations, his dartings and caperings, were so ingenious, his grin so infectious, that the company was soon laughing and pelting him with flowers.

He sang in a high falsetto. He stood on his head, and his little feet described the motions of the dance. He spun on one hand. He turned somersaults and handsprings from one end of the long room to the other. The Athenians were boys again and forgot they had been bored and resentful. They finally sprang from their chairs and joining hands danced around him. The girls, at a motion from their mistress, withdrew. Their places at the instruments were taken by men slaves.

Alcibiades alone remained in his seat, but he, too, was diverted and laughed heartily and clapped his hands. He was recalled by the voice of his hostess.

" We are like that in Egypt—we women," she said. " Sometimes we admit the men, but they are no longer capable of being children again. Life in the house makes them dull—like your women, I suppose."

" We have a saying that the boy in a man never dies. Is it possible that women——" He paused on a note of profound incredulity.

"Why not? And certainly it is true. Do we not shoulder the heavy burdens of the State and the market-place? Is it not natural we should cherish that spark of youth—in self-defence, perhaps?"

"My imagination closes up like an oyster," he said dryly. "I have seen women combat age with many pigments, but that may be taken as a sign that youth has fled and they know it."

She laughed. "So do our men; and we do not discourage it if it makes them happier."

"Oh, for Zeus' sake," he burst out uncontrollably, "talk to me no more of your Egypt to-night! Tell me of yourself," he added hastily. "Why have you come here? I am consumed with curiosity."

"Do not many strangers visit your beautiful Athens?"

"They do not bring a retinue with them and rent a house unless they have come to live, and it is not to be imagined that you would desert Egypt."

"Why not?"

"Why—— What could compensate you for the loss of the power you exercise in your own country? Here, remarkable as you are, you are a woman and nothing else. You could never hold office; not if we revoked the law that forbids even the vote to aliens."

"Power!" And for a moment her face was almost wistful. "Perhaps I do not care as much for power as you think. When I am thirty, perhaps. But it seems to me that youth was made for other things. I always wished to travel, but my mother would not permit it; Egyptians rarely travel. As soon as she died I determined to see the world."

"And what do you seek?"

She moved restlessly. "I hardly know. I have come first to your beautiful city, of which I have heard all my life. Perhaps I shall go on to Carthage—Syracuse. . . . I have not made up my mind."

"Do you seek a husband?" he asked boldly. "I

can well understand that no Egyptian is worthy of you. Several of these men here to-night are unmarried——"

"And do you think I would submit to being shut up in women's quarters?" she asked scornfully. "Even you, Alcibiades, would not be worth that."

"We have a great woman here named Aspasia. No women's quarters have ever secluded her."

"I know all about your Aspasia. She is intellectual, learned. I am neither. Men visit her for discourse. I have nothing to say those men would care to hear. Nor do I intend to study philosophy. No, I shall be no Athenian's wife."

"His hetæra then?" He expected to be annihilated with a glance, but she turned and looked at him with a smile that curled her flexible lips at the corners.

"Perhaps. Who knows? But it will take me long to make up my mind. I have seen women in love—driven by their senses to take a painted lover. It has seemed to me a silly and contemptible sort of surrender."

"You would dominate even in love? Well, no Athenian will be dominated by a woman—for long. A month; perhaps two months. Then, if he has not wearied, his head is cool, and resumes control."

"Perhaps not as much as you think. I hear your hetæræ are very clever. Athenians are sensual, and until a man's passions are attracted elsewhere the woman knows how to dominate, I fancy."

"I have never been dominated by a woman," he said arrogantly. "Not even for a night."

"Ah, but you are Alcibiades!" And although he looked at her sharply, her eyes were soft and almost innocent. "I was speaking of Athenians in general."

"You might as well be a hetæra and have done with it if you continue to live here alone." Alcibiades, mollified, felt an impulse to protect her. "As soon as Athens is convinced you have not come on a political mission, you will be classed with the hetæræ, and if

you do not openly take a lover they will credit you with many."

"I care nothing for that. If you are Alcibiades I am Tiy. If a man pleases me I may take him as a lover. Or, if I choose to marry, I shall do so and take him back to Thebes——"

"And do you imagine for a moment that any Athenian would consent to live in such a farcical country? Accept so ignoble a position? You have come to the wrong city, O Tiy. Go on to Syracuse or Carthage."

"Well, perhaps I will," she said lightly. "Your men are very interesting and handsome but they do not disturb my sleep. And now, perhaps, you will give the signal to go? They look like Pans and satyrs with their garlands askew, and they have drunk much wine and become further intoxicated by the dance. I fear they may raid my inner quarters—and carry away an unpleasant impression of my powerful Nubians. Better take them to the house of one of your hetæræ to finish the night."

Alcibiades rose. "I accept dismissal, O Tiy. But I shall not wait for another banquet to see you again. Are your doors open before sundown to Athenians who would see if you are as beautiful by day as by night?"

"Come when you will," she said indifferently. "I have no wish to spend my time in Athens alone."

XVIII

But it was some time before Alcibiades could formulate a policy with regard to Tiy, much less lay siege to that fortress both fearsome and provocative. He recognized that her conquest would add even to his reputation, for the men had made up their minds that whatever her purpose in coming to Athens it was not

to adorn her door with a phallic knocker. Curiosity still beset them, and although Alcibiades went several times to her house in the hour after siesta he found other men there and she showed no disposition to grant him a private audience.

She received her guests in the andron as it was the largest and most luxurious room in the house, and set fruits and singular but delicious cakes before them; often her maidens were called in to discourse sweet music, and if only the less libidinous of her new friends were present she permitted them to talk to the girls, who were educated and intelligent. She taught them an Egyptian game called draughts, and if they asked for the dwarf he was sent for to perform his antics.

Altogether the novelty pleased the young men of Athens; they lost their sense of antagonism, for she was less awe-inspiring on these informal occasions, and avoided the subject of Egypt and woman. With her dusky hair wound simply about her head, and clad in a simple white garment bound with a red sash, and no pigment to extend those large oval unfathomable eyes, they found her more human, less idol, perhaps a trifle less masculine, every time they sat in her presence; and each assured himself confidently that he ultimately would be chosen. She gave no sign of preference, however, save perhaps for Axiochus, whom she permitted to take Setamon abroad, although never at night. But even him, to his chagrin, she treated as an elder brother.

Alcibiades ceased to go to her house at all, for political events were thickening, and for a time he forgot her.

He was elected a Strategos amidst a scene of wild enthusiasm in the Ecclesia, and publicly pronounced First Citizen of Athens, with all the powers, as President of the Board of Strategoi, that Pericles had enjoyed for nearly forty years.

The attempt of the Oligarchs to re-elect Nicias was

defeated, and he retired, disconcerted and mortified, to the seclusion of his house. Until the last moment, and in spite of many warnings, he had not believed the Athenians would forget his great services to the State, and his disappointment was equalled only by his apprehensions. But if he ceased to go abroad, he directed his friends to watch every move of the enemy.

It was not long before he heard of the intention of Argos to send an embassy to Athens, and he dispatched a hard-riding messenger to Sparta, bidding her follow suit with an embassy of her own and lose not a moment.

Argos, with a profound conviction that Alcibiades was the coming man, and delighted at the prospect of the friendship of Athens, and ultimate headship in the Peloponnesus, had no difficulty in persuading Elis and Mantinea to join her in asking alliance with the most powerful City State in Hellas. The embassy was timed to arrive four days after the election of Alcibiades; it went at once before the Council and made a favourable impression. The decision, however, lay with the Ecclesia, which would be called two days hence.

But the envoys were no sooner housed than a messenger came running to the door of Alcibiades with the news that three eminent citizens of Sparta, Endius, Philocharidas, and Leon, had been seen approaching from the Megarian frontier.

For the moment Alcibiades was dumbfounded. The Argives and their allies had observed the utmost secrecy, and it was not generally known even in Athens that they had arrived. He recognized the hand of Nicias, who had his share of Attic craft, and flung him the tribute of a grudging admiration.

His resourceful mind, after that first moment of confusion, lit on a plan whereby he should both circumvent Nicias and further discredit the Spartans. That it involved lying and teachery did not hold his

hand for a moment. With an end to accomplish, whatever means were convenient must serve his purpose.

He sent Saon to meet the envoys and assure Endius of his friendship and beg him to accept the hospitality he had found agreeable under less promising conditions. Then he hastened to the allied envoys, who were lodged with the Proxenus of Argos, and bade them remain in seclusion, trusting to him alone to bring their suit to a successful issue.

Endius, who had no reason to suspect Alcibiades of double-dealing, accepted the invitation, and as he entered his presence began at once to apologize for his failure in persuading the ephors to appoint him Proxenus of Sparta. But Alcibiades, who had welcomed him at the door, clapped him on the shoulder and dismissed the subject.

"What is past is past," he said. "No need to assure Alcibiades that his friend would fail him in naught. I think only of the present and the joy it gives me to see you in my house again. Nor shall I ask what business brought you to Athens. We can talk of that later and only if you wish. I must tell you all the gossip, which will interest you after living so long among us."

And after Endius had gone to his room and refreshed himself with a bath and clean raiment, he returned to walk up and down the aula with his fascinating young friend and rest his mind from cares of state.

He looked at Alcibiades with a sigh of envy. The Spartans were no devotees of beauty; indeed they had been taught to despise it and grown to manhood in the belief that it was a canker eating into the heart of Athens, and would one day bring her crumbling to the feet of a state that followed the banner of Mars. But Endius was an intelligent man and ten years of war with the Athenians had altered his preconceived ideas of both their courage and prowess; moreover,

his long sojourn in their city had awakened some latent sense of beauty. He delighted to look at Alcibiades, but he envied him his radiance and gaiety. He was now the great man in Athens and dire events were threatening, yet his brow, smooth and broad above his classic spirited nose, was as free of care as if he were a youth in the palæstra. He pressed his arm affectionately and felt young himself for the moment.

Alcibiades was too clever to ignore politics altogether, and diversified his amusing stories with a recital of his rise to power, subtly conveying the impression that Nicias, discredited, was a poor reed to lean on.

In the afternoon he took Endius to the stadium, and when night fell gave him a decorous banquet. Critias, who was partly in his confidence—he trusted no man wholly—led the company in sneers at "poor old Nicias."

On the following morning the Spartans, escorted by Nicias, went before the Council. Endius was spokesman, and he was extremely conciliatory. The contrast between this charming gentleman and the curt ill-mannered Andromedes impressed the dignitaries deeply, and several had known him well during his sojourn among them.

He had come, he said, to deprecate their possibly contemplated alliance with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis, for it would inevitably lead to war. Argos, once the first state in the Peloponnesus, was swollen with the ambition to attain once more to supremacy, and her wish to enter into an alliance with Athens could mean but one thing: war on Sparta with the assistance of the Athenian forces. Sparta might find it wise to take the initiative.

As for the alliance with Bœotia, it had been concluded with no purpose of hostility to Athens, for the Spartans were more eager than the Athenians for a long term

of peace. He vowed that Amphipolis should be restored before the year was out, and begged they would consider the return of Pylos.

He and his fellow envoys were entrusted with full powers of settlement.

The Council listened with growing favour. Quick to anger and quick to reaction, they had almost forgotten the terrific indignation excited by Andromedes. And more than anything on earth they wanted peace. It was true that if they agreed to the proposals of the Argives, and Sparta took it as a personal affront, Attica might be invaded within the month. The new country homes, the new vineyards and crops, the newly planted olive groves, must be preserved at any cost.

They dismissed the envoys with compliments, and bade them appear before the morrow's Ecclesia, make what concessions they could, and state definitely they were come with full powers of settlement.

XIX

The meeting had not been open to the public, but Alcibiades received an immediate report. Critias had his spies everywhere. When Endius returned to his house he received him with a grave demeanour, all statesman, not a vestige of irresponsible youth.

"What I ask is for your own sake, Endius," he said, coldly impressive. "Go to your friends and bring them here at once, and with the utmost secrecy. I have something of great import to say to all of you."

Endius, intensely curious, and subtly depressed, asked for an immediate explanation, but in vain. Finally he went to the house of Nicias, now Proxenus of Sparta, found him from home, and conducted Leon and Philocharidas to the presence of Alcibiades.

He received them in the andron, still grave, but,

ever the gracious host, asked them to partake of the "rich and rosy wine" he had just received from Lesbos. While their palates were caressing the wine, whose like they had never tasted, he asked Endius what fortune he had had with the Council. He was given a full account, for the envoys were proud of their reception, and there was no cause for secrecy.

Alcibiades shook his head.

"The members of the Council are sane and temperate men," he said slowly as if weighing every word. "Always reasonable and inclined to any measure that will preserve the peace. But not so the Demos. They are still furious over the proposals of Andromedes—a bluff soldier who never should have been sent on a diplomatic mission. They will begin to shout and heap insults upon you the moment you inform them you are here as ambassadors entrusted with full powers for immediate settlement. The Council is not in touch with the people, or it would have given you the same warning. Remember that I am their leader and know their every mood.

"Do nothing of the sort, I beg of you. Conceal that fact adroitly. It is enough for the Council to know it. Begin your oration by apologizing for Andromedes, and then tell them you have come not only to apologize, but to explain, to discuss, and then to report to Sparta their reception of your proposals. The people, who will have received you in a hostile spirit, will then see that you are not to be intimidated, nor to be bullied into concessions; they will subside, and be curious to hear what you have to say.

"Then, when you have finished, I will mount the Bema as your advocate. My refusal to consider the return of Pylos was due entirely to my indignation with Andromedes—who made Sparta hateful to all men and would have infuriated Zeus himself.

"And if I, Men of Sparta, plead in the Ecclesia for the evacuation of Pylos, it will be returned to you, for

my word is law with the people to-day. As for Argos, I need not assure you, she shall not be given a hearing, for Athens must sacrifice all things for the continued friendship of Sparta."

They listened to him with both concern and gratitude, for they had received not a hint that the suit of the three allies had been inspired by himself. If Nicias had his suspicions he had neglected to impart them, and there made one of his many mistakes.

Nor would they soon forget the appalling account Andromedes had given of his reception by the Demos. They were impressed by the sagacity of the advice, but they demurred nevertheless.

"We *have* come with full powers of settlement," said Endius, who disliked eating his words. "What will the Council think of us?"

"The Council will understand, for they are wily politicians themselves. And if not, my explanation will satisfy them. But take my word for it—if you begin with the haughty statement that you come as the two kings, the thirty members of the council, and the five ephors to settle all these vexed questions out of hand, you will get no further. It will be a repetition of the scene Andromedes must have related to you, and which you hardly can have forgotten."

They had not, but still they hesitated.

"By to-morrow," said Leon, "all Athens assuredly will have heard of our interview with the Council—heard that we have come with full powers of settlement. Athens is not Sparta. You have no secrets from the people."

"They will have heard rumours, nothing more. They will be relieved to hear that the rumours were incorrect. Your only chance, gentlemen, of accomplishing your mission is to do as I advise you."

They discussed the matter for an hour, and then Endius asked: "We have your solemn assurance,

Alcibiades, that you will speak for us, and bring our mission to a successful conclusion ? "

" You have the word of Alcibiades," he said proudly ; and who could doubt him ? He stood before them like a young god, wafted down from Olympus, with friendly eyes and candid brow and an expression both grave and infinitely sweet. Such conscience as he possessed troubled him not at all. He could persuade himself of anything he chose, and in this new struggle with Nicias, with one of his dearest dreams threatened, he had convinced himself without effort that he was pursuing his devious way for the welfare of Athens. It was of the utmost importance that Argos should be detached from Sparta and allied with Athens, and the friendship of Mantinea and Elis was of almost equal moment. To cripple Sparta in every way that presented itself must surely be the aim of one to whom Athens had confided her destinies. What was a lie more or less ? What was politics—statesmanship—but lies ?

Treachery to an old friend, not only of himself but his house ? A statesman acknowledges no friend beyond the confines of his country.

When he finally escorted the envoys to the door he impressed upon them the importance of secrecy ; above all, from Nicias. He was too weak and vacillating to be trusted.

XX

THE sun rising slowly above the long dark line of Hymettus shed a crimson glow on the stately temples of the Acropolis, the beautiful columned buildings, the statues and porches of the Agora. The vast army of owls that lived on every housetop ceased their night-long hooting and the birds began to sing. Even the atmosphere, light, brilliant, exhilarating, seemed sweeter as the women passed through the streets with their garlands to sell in the market-place.

It was a lovely and beneficent morning, and Endius joined his friends at the house of Nicias and walked with dignity and confidence to the Pnyx. They wore the grey Spartan cloak, but scrupulously clean, and were sandalled out of deference to Athens. Hair and beards were brushed and anointed. All three were impressive of figure; with regular if somewhat heavy features, and fair colouring ; a handsome trio.

Nicias, slightly bowed, walked with them, and he too was smiling. There would be opposition from Alcibiades on general principles, but this embassy was favoured by the Council, who would speak for it if necessary. But such need was hardly to be anticipated. Endius had a winning presence and a fine command of words. He himself would follow with a speech, carefully prepared, and the Athenians would listen to him : for as soon as they had punished a man they began to feel sorry for him and were willing to grant him small favours.

Alcibiades had gone on ahead.

The Pnyx was crowded when the Spartans arrived, the dignitaries in place behind and on either side of the Bema, imposing in their white mantles. The Oligarchs and the Demos, in every variety of dress from white or coloured himatia to the rough smocks of farmers and charcoal burners and the goat-skins of mountaineers, sat on the ground or on stools they had brought.

Alcibiades sat on the left of the Bema and smiled encouragingly as the Spartans appeared and were given seats opposite. Nicias looked at him glumly, wondering if anything would ever lower that arrogant head.

The Spartans were somewhat surprised at being received in silence ; they had expected hostile mutterings. But after all these men were hardly out of bed, and still too heavy with sleep to indulge in violent emotion. The pig was sacrificed and his blood sprinkled. The herald made the invocation to the gods. Alcibiades

stepped forward, although he did not ascend the Bema. He had suggested to Endius when leaving the house that before he made his oration it would be well for the people to understand his position, and thus save himself an unpleasant demonstration. The President of the day had agreed that in the interests of peace the opening proceedings should be less formal than usual.

Alcibiades turned to the Assembly.

"We have with us three visitors from Sparta," he announced in a clear ringing voice, while Nicias frowned apprehensively. "They have come, we feel assured, on a peaceful mission. What it is we have yet to learn."

Every man present knew what they had come for, and every detail of that meeting with the Council. They were come to settle vexed questions once for all —it was to be hoped—and they had been vested with authority. All wondered why Alcibiades had taken upon himself to vary the opening formalities. The Oligarchs shrugged and inferred it was merely a desire to thrust himself forward—as usual. The members of his own club and of those affiliated grinned expectantly. The Demos delighted in his surprises and put it down to that.

Alcibiades turned to the right and made his voice both sonorous and gentle. "Endius," he said, "will you tell the Ecclesia on what footing you have come? What powers you have brought with you? Are you a fully accredited ambassador, or have you merely come on a visit to Athens and expressed a desire to address the Ecclesia?"

Endius rose to his feet and came forward. He bent his head to the dignitaries and turned to the people.

"Men of Athens," he said, "I am here only as a humble subject of Sparta. I come endowed with no plenipotentiary powers. But if you will listen to me while I explain many matters, and make several tentative proposals, I am sure that all differences

between us can be settled before the beginning of the next lunar month——"

But his speech ended there. The mouths of the Council were hanging open, but the entire Ecclesia was on its feet. Only Nicias had dropped his head into his hands.

"What?" "What?" "What?" The people hurled the word at the bewildered Spartan. It seemed to have the substance of rocks flung down upon an enemy from the heights of a mountain pass. "*Spartans!*" "Liars all of you!" "Not for two days together can you say the same thing! Hold the same thought!" "Get out!" "Go home! We want none of you!"

Endius, trembling in every limb, not with fear but with dire apprehension, looked appealingly at Alcibiades, who, his eyes flashing, his head thrown back, sprang to the Bema.

"You heard him!" he cried in tones of amazement and scorn. "But for your demonstration I should have believed my ears had deceived me. Oh, Sparta! Sparta! Will you never learn the value of honour and truth? Can you never be relied upon for two days together? A fine state for Athenians to ally themselves with—Athenians who are ever scrupulous in keeping their word!

"Athenians, I heard from their own lips that they came here possessed of all the powers ever conferred upon an embassy. Either they lied to me—and to the Council—or they have just lied to you. What is their object? Did the courage of this man fail him at the last moment, fearing that he might be tripped up in his pretensions; or has he so poor an opinion of the intelligence of Athenians that he believed he could win them best by subterfuge?"

During the vociferous applause, interspersed with more epithets hurled at the Spartans, he turned to the pale, staring, helpless men, and flung out his long

beautiful hand with a gesture as eloquent of indignation as his words.

"Go home, Men of Sparta," he cried, his voice harsh with authority. "Go home and do not return to us again until you have devised a consistent policy, or until you know your own minds."

He swung once more to the Assembly. "You may know, Men of Athens, that we have also in our city an embassy composed of citizens from Argos, Elis, and Mantinea, three powerful states that ask for alliance with our Empire. These Spartans came to prevent this alliance if they could, for it would weaken the power of Lacedemonia and add vastly to that of Athens. We have no wish for further war with Sparta, and I need not tell you that the best way to avoid it is to strengthen our Empire, and cripple Lacedemonia in every way possible. With these three Peloponnesian allies, with their wealth and their armies at our disposal, Sparta will never dare attack us again. I shall now send for these envoys, Athenians, and ask you to listen to them, and consider their proposals——"

"We will! We will!" The shout raised the echoes. "Down with Sparta! Long live the friends of Athens!"

Alcibiades swept the Assembly, the infuriated Oligarchs, the humiliated Spartans, the adoring Demos, with a glance of arrogant triumph.

"When did the Athenians, the most intelligent men in all the world, ever fail to consult their best interests?" he cried. "When—— Ah!"

The Bema had leaped under his feet. The columns in the Agora embraced one another in a drunken dance. The whole earth seemed to shudder.

"An earthquake! An earthquake!" The Ecclesia broke up in confusion. Even those who were not terrified by a convulsion of nature, none too rare in Hellas, accepted this demonstration as a sign from the

gods that no further business in assembly should be conducted before the rising of another sun. Earthquakes, thunderstorms, even rain, were ominous warnings that public discussions had gone far enough for the moment.

Alcibiades cursed audibly, but he knew the power of superstition. Reckless and fearless as he was he would not have dared publicly to ridicule the gods and bid the assemblage be men and not idiots. Moreover, he had scored his points, and the Ecclesia could be called again on the morrow. He held his head higher than ever, were that possible, as he passed the murderous countenances of the Spartans, and hastened to join his friends who awaited him in the street. They accompanied him to his house, pelting him with questions, more than one of them suspicious, but cynically admiring his tactics. Or pretended to, as a means of surprising his confidence. But he was not to be drawn; it was his aim to inspire trust in his followers. He well knew the Spartans would never betray him! He laughed and told his friends laconically—avoiding Aristophanes' sharp gaze—that he had suspected their purpose and shown them up at once, that he might the more swiftly get rid of them and send for the three allies.

XXI

Nicias was roused at last. He persuaded the Council to call an Ecclesia on the following day. It was thinly attended, for it was known that the Council had consented to give him a public hearing before inviting the allies to address the Assembly. Few cared to listen to Nicias, and the majority had made up their minds.

Alcibiades did not fail to be present, and regarded the fallen statesman with an expression of amused contempt as he assured the Athenians that the friend-

ship of Sparta was preferable to that of Argos, and pleaded with them to come to no decision until the intentions of that state, seemingly so contradictory and involved, were definitely known. At all costs they must maintain their alliance with Sparta; but he admitted freely that an immediate explanation must be exacted from her, and he asked the Athenians to send him at once to demand it, accompanied by such colleagues as they thought best to appoint.

He would inform the Lacedemonians that if their intentions were honourable they must prove it by at once rebuilding Panakton and restoring it to Athens, compelling the surrender of Amphipolis, renouncing their alliance with Bœotia, unless Bœotia would consent to become a party to the original Treaty.

The embassy should start without the loss of another day.

His sincerity was impressive and what he said was very truth. They shuddered at the prospect of a renewal of the war, and after all a treaty was a treaty.

As he stepped down from the Bema all eyes turned to Alcibiades. He had been thinking rapidly, and he shrugged his shoulders and ascended the steps.

"It is only fair to give Nicias one last chance," he said suavely. "And the same may be said for Sparta. She will not agree to one of those proposals, but it is well to have the matter settled once for all. Nor will she break the alliance, for she is in no position to go to war at present; her enemies are too numerous. When Nicias returns, Men of Athens, I shall bring the Argives, the Mantineans, and the Eleans before you and speak at greater length than I shall to-day. Send him and three or four other respectable citizens to Sparta and send them at once."

Nicias left that same afternoon; the disgraced envoys had preceded him by twenty-four hours.

Alcibiades had once more proved his perspicacity as a statesman. The Spartans, furious at the treatment

of their envoys—the second humiliation visited upon them within a brief time—and even more enraged at the demand to move forthwith—for they hated quick action—rejected the proposals of Nicias with contumely. But even the most hostile of the ephors had a personal liking for Nicias, and to comfort him agreed that the terms of the Treaty should be formally renewed.

An empty concession, and Nicias returned to Athens and the Ecclesia to receive every evidence of displeasure. Alcibiades introduced the Argives, the Mantineans, and the Eleans, and the alliance was concluded then and there.

Even middle-aged and elderly men of both parties, citizens of importance in the State, went to the house of Alcibiades that afternoon, for there was no longer any doubt that he was the one power in Athens. Only he could pull himself down, and with his abnormal cleverness there was no prospect of that at present.

He received them cordially enough, although he listened to their fulsome congratulations with little attempt to conceal his natural arrogance. He despised them all, for their day was past, and he was the leader of a generation that would rule Athens henceforth. He might have treated them worse and still been sure of their vote in the Ecclesia. Among those men were members of his tribe and his clan, come to pay court to one who had received nothing from them heretofore but loud disapproval.

At last he herded them out and turned his mind to a more congenial matter. He must celebrate that night. A banquet at his own house, or——

He was tired of secret revels, of hetæræ smuggled in looking as much like men as possible. For a year it had irked his haughty spirit to defer to public opinion lest his ambitions be thwarted. He might be capable of deceit and treachery, when nothing else would serve, but his natural inclination was to do as he pleased,

how and when he pleased, and to Pluto with those who presumed to censure him.

No one enjoyed more than he a revel in the house of some one of the hetæræ. To be sure, these carousals were rather tame when compared with what one heard of similar entertainments in Corinth, for these "companions," while permitting the men to drink to their capacity's utmost, sing their most ribald songs, shout as loudly as their high spirits dictated, had cultivated a refinement that was one of their attractions for the fastidious Athenians, and would permit no flagrant liberties; but within bounds they could make a night of it. The courtesans of a lower grade were often guests at the banquets of men, but their houses were not used for entertaining by the Eupatridæ.

He suddenly remembered the Ionian Nemea. Men raved over that exquisite blonde beauty, her varied accomplishments, her tantalizing moods and caprices. A woman no man could be sure of, yet an artist in the lore of Aphrodite; greedy for gold, yet—so they vowed—giving more than she received if the man pleased her.

Alcibiades wondered why he had never thought of her before. He recalled that she had been pointed out to him at the last Dionysia, but he had been too deeply absorbed in his political fortunes to give her more than a passing glance.

He made up his mind on the instant and sent for Saon.

"Go to the house of the hetæra Nemea," he bade the useful minion, "and tell her that Alcibiades will give a banquet there to-night should it please her. She will invite the women—three or four will be enough, but they must be the prettiest and the wittiest—and I will invite six or seven men. Go then to the caterer and order the dinner and flute girls. Send the wine from here. When you return I will give you the names of the men."

XXII

Nemea experienced the one profound emotion of her life when Saon delivered his message. Alcibiades! First Citizen of Athens! Honour enough, either, but the two in one! Alcibiades at last and without contrivance of hers, although she had exhausted her imagination scheming. She would be known as the first hetæra in Athens to-morrow.

She ran from house to house inviting her friends: Theodoté, Rhodippe, and Damasandra, who had just captured Archeptolemus, recently come from Miletus, and the son of the wealthy Hippodamus, architect of Piræus.

Her invitations were eagerly accepted after the cries of amazement and congratulation were over, and she returned to her house to try on one evening chiton after another and drive her maid frantic.

Alcibiades decided to ask only the less serious members of his club: Meletus, Theodorus, Archippus, Polytion, Polystratus. As Critias was away he asked also Niceratus son of Nicias, but a follower of himself and alienated from his father. War had brought its usual demoralizations. Few sons in these days gave their parents the filial respect that had distinguished the youth of Athens under the sway of Pericles. They laughed at traditions and "old men," who mishandled war and government, and they were bent on enjoying life to the apex, for who could tell when their bones would be raked out of the battlefield pyre? They worshipped Alcibiades, who was the embodiment of triumphant glorious youth, and had the proudest and most intolerant spirit ever known in Athens; who did as he pleased and snapped his fingers at stupid grumbling elders. He was all they would have been themselves, and if they hated him at times for his arrogance and insolence, he had but to smile or throw an arm over their shoulders to bind them to his chariot wheels

afresh. They revelled in his recent triumph and had cheered themselves voiceless in the Ecclesia.

An hour before sundown a sudden puckish idea darted into the mind of Alcibiades, and he hurried his toilet and went to the house of the Egyptian. She was in the aula sitting by the fountain. At this late hour he had been sure of finding her alone.

She raised her heavy brows and frowned slightly as Alcibiades was ushered in by the big Nubian, who apparently never left her door.

"Ah," she said coldly, and without rising, "Alcibiades at last finds time to come to the house of Tiy."

He replied blandly: "You are the daughter of a stateswoman, and something of one yourself, O Tiy. If matters of moment are to be accomplished there must be no distractions. I have avoided this house of deliberate purpose. But now, thank the gods, the State can take care of itself for a while, and my first thought was to hasten here and ask your indulgence."

He smiled as he saw her brow relax and her mouth curl at the corners. But although she motioned him to a seat she spoke dryly.

"True, O Alcibiades, I had forgotten that my first friend in Athens was also the First Citizen, and engaged in defeating his enemies and accomplishing his will. But how do you dare close your eyes in sleep? You have other enemies besides Nicias. Must you not be on the alert every moment?"

"The day was made for work, the night for play. And be sure that while I am asleep others are awake. I have many friends devoted to my interests."

"Have you perfect faith in all of them? What of Androcles?"

"Androcles? I have known him from boyhood."

"You must be a keen judge of men, Alcibiades, else would you not be the head of the State at thirty, gifted otherwise as you may be. But the keenest are often blinded by the gods. Androcles is wary and cunning;

he guards his tongue. But I plied him with a rich old wine from Syracuse one day when he lingered after the others, and he betrayed himself. I am sure he hates you and would do you injury if he could."

"Well, he cannot," said Alcibiades contemptuously. "Neither he nor any other that may hate me while professing allegiance. It may be as you say. We have quarrelled bitterly at times, and as boys used our fists. As I was the stronger I always beat him. But I thank you for the hint and will entrust him with no secrets. He is bound by oath to reveal no measures determined by the club."

He leaned forward and bent his dark blue gaze on this Egyptian enigma. "And have I won your interest and friendship, Tiy, that you search out my enemies and place me on my guard?" he asked softly.

It was perhaps impossible for Tiy to respond coquettishly to any man, but she flushed and drew back, and her mouth trembled slightly as she answered rapidly: "You are a great man and he is a small one. You have been generous and hospitable and introduced me to much that is agreeable in Athens. My afternoons and banquets are very pleasant, and your cousin took me with Setamon to your wonderful Acropolis. I doubt if there is anything in all the world to compare with those beautiful and inspiring temples."

Alcibiades was too wise to experiment further at the moment. Besides there was no time. He sat back in his chair and pulled at a curl that grew just above his ear, a trick he had.

"I must take you myself," he said, "and am jealous that Axiochus should be the first. But I have come to propose something for to-night that may amuse you—I hardly know, however—you may be very angry that I dare suggest it." And he looked at her anxiously.

"But tell me! What is it? I am all curiosity."

"To-night the hetæra Nemea of Miletus gives a banquet, of which I am really host. It will be very

gay, not to say hilarious, but not too ribald, for only the aristocracy of the hetæræ will be present and they have a great opinion of themselves. I suggest that you disguise yourself as your brother and go with me. Zeus knows," he added whimsically, "you can look enough like a man when you choose. And pitch your voice as convincingly!"

She had risen to her feet and for the first time he saw a dancing light in her eyes. "Did I not leave Egypt for adventure?" she cried. "I would go even as I am, but perhaps it is wiser I be disguised——"

"Oh, yes! For Zeus' sake! And should the men recognize you they'll keep their counsel. But those women must never suspect that Tiy has entered the house of a hetæra. What of your hair?"

He looked admiringly at the dense wavy mass that hung unbound, a black panel to set off the jewelled ivory of her face.

She caught it in both hands, gave a sudden twist, and wrapped it flatly about her head. "Have no fear," she said, "it is very fine. I shall return in a moment and I promise you will not know me from Setamon."

He walked up and down the colonnade during her absence, much interested in this new phase of her, and wondering how he was to accomplish her subjection. He felt singularly at a loss, for he had never pursued a woman in his life. From the time he was seventeen and had met women of his own class at the levees of Aspasia, or had escaped from the house and visited the street of the courtesans, they had fallen into his arms like ripe pomegranates, and been valued accordingly. But while he might flatter himself that this strange creature liked him well enough to trap his enemies and warn him, the vainest of men could detect no sign of surrender.

He heard a light step and saw Setamon approaching from the pastas. The youth must be got rid of

instantly. That tiresome boy hated his sister and would be sure to tell Axiochus of her escapade. How different was that slouching gait from Tiy's free stride!

"I am awaiting your sister," he said haughtily. "I have important matters to discuss with her. I beg that you will retire at once."

His peremptory order to a young man in his own house was greeted with a chuckling laugh.

"Then I may be sure that your friends will not recognize me! I have locked Setamon in his room."

"No! Wonderful! But take me where there are lamps. The light is faint here."

She returned to the pastas and lit the lamps. He looked her over critically. Her hair was concealed by a head-dress of striped black cloth that began at the eyebrows and fell in several panels to her shoulders, and she wore the long smock-like garment, reaching from throat to ankles, that Setamon covered himself with abroad. Her skin had been darkened with a brown pigment, and she had even assumed Setamon's sulky pout.

"If you could deceive me!" cried Alcibiades.

XXIII

Nemea's house was small, but the andron, as was usual in Athenian houses, was larger than the other rooms and held eight couches comfortably. It was on the right of the entrance, with the kitchen behind; the bedrooms were upstairs, and the rooms on the other side of the little court were mere alcoves and used for storing food and wine.

She had brought handsome rugs and hangings from Miletus, and no couches in Athens were more luxurious. There were piles of cushions in the corners and the lamps shed a becoming light.

Alcibiades was the last to arrive. The men were

beginning to grumble, and Nemea to press her hand to her heart. What if that spoiled capricious darling of Athens should not come after all ? True he had paid for the dinner, but the banquet without Alcibiades would be even as a spring day without the sun.

She wore a pleated flowing chiton, made in two parts : scarlet, gold-embroidered, exposing the right leg as she walked, after the Greek fashion. Theodoté was a blaze of yellow, Rhodippe wore palm green, and Damasandra looked like the dawn in pink. All were filleted with gold bands and had decked themselves with the jewels of generous lovers.

The night was warm and the men had laid aside their mantles, their simple white chitons an excellent foil for the elaborate costumes of the women.

" I vote we have the tables brought in," said Meletus, who was suffering the pangs of hunger. " Like as not he's made up his mind at the last moment to go elsewhere."

But as he spoke Alcibiades entered with the young Egyptian.

" I apologize for being late, Nemea," he said with a smile, and a stare of admiration that set her cold heart beating. " But it occurred to me that it would be kind to introduce young Setamon to one of our feasts. I had some difficulty persuading his sister, but she finally consented on condition I never lost sight of him. He will therefore share a couch with me."

" Oh—oh——" stammered Nemea. " But as you, O Alcibiades, are host, and I hostess, would it not be fitting we share the couch at the head of the room ? "

" No, no, beautiful Nemea. As host and hostess we should dispose ourselves opposite, not together. And I ask for nothing better, for then I may gaze at you all evening."

His tones were bantering but decisive. Nemea, who had planned a campaign, in which propinquity played no inconsiderable part, forced a smile, darted a venomous

glance at "Setamon," and clapped her hands for the tables.

The men regarded the Egyptian youth with little favour. Few had treated him with more than barren politeness, for he had none of the perfections of boys trained in palæstra and gymnasium. And to-night he was less attractive than ever with that ridiculous headdress and the hard unblinking stare of an owl in the daytime.

When two men occupied a couch they half-reclined, one behind the other, supporting the left elbow on a cushion. Alcibiades placed Tiy in front of him and showed her how to lift the left leg and thrust the other under his knee.

"It must be unbearable after a time," she whispered. "I shall get a cramp."

"If you do, get up and move about. You are a foreigner unused to our customs, and no one will criticize."

The hetæræ reclined when a banquet was given in the house of one of their order. Nemea had decided to share a couch with Damasandra; and Theodoté and Rhodippe, having no particular interest in these men—save only and always Alcibiades—shared another. Their soft and lovely chitons made harmonious combinations of colour, and although their duty was to amuse the men, they could eat their dinner in peace, for there was rarely any sustained conversation before the wine was brought in.

Nemea, whose appetite had vanished, sent for her harp and played charmingly. Her graceful body swayed over the instrument, her beautiful arms caressed it. It was not long before she caught the roving eye of Alcibiades. He forgot poor Tiy shifting uneasily in front of him. Aphrodite herself, full of promise in spite of her somewhat hard and calculating eyes, which she managed to deepen by lowering her broad white lids. He understood her perfectly, but he asked

nothing of women but beauty and accomplishment in the arts of their calling. Unlike other men, he rarely talked to them, infinitely preferring the conversation of his own sex. He reflected, as he exchanged amorous glances with the Ionian, that he had matched ideas with but two women in his life: Aspasia who had brought him up, and this Egyptian who was as easy to make love to as one of her pyramids. He intended to subdue her in time, but meanwhile he could divert himself very agreeably with Nemea.

It suddenly occurred to him that if he could awaken jealousy in Tiy it might hasten his suit. She gave him the opportunity to address her by swinging about suddenly with her back to the room and stretching out her legs.

"I can stand it no longer," she whispered. "Thank the gods they look upon me as a sulky ill-mannered boy."

The soft oval of her face in the close head-dress looked so young and petulant, so different from its usual high majesty, that he shook with mirth. And he found her really attractive for the first time. After all, she was a woman under that hard shell, and nothing could alter the fact that, however unnatural conditions may have developed their intellects and bodies and given them a transient dominance, women were made for the pleasure of men. Their functions were unaltered; and gall them as it must, they were still forced to bear children.

Athens alone must have taught this woman a lesson.

"What do you think of our hetæræ?" he asked banteringly. "Have you any women in Egypt as beautiful—as Nemea, for instance?"

Was it possible that Tiy sniffed? "We have young men as beautiful—and no more bedizened. They are more subtle, however. That woman is telling the entire company that she wishes to capture you—and some part of your treasure."

"Well, why not? I have rarely seen anything more exquisite—even in Ionia; and a man expects to pay for his pleasures. I never resent their greed. A profession is a profession."

He was chuckling as he watched her closely.

Her long eyes slid round at him. "I despise men more than ever since I have lived in Athens," she said icily. "If our men are despicable in one way so are yours in another, for you think of nothing but your pleasures. I wonder you find time for politics."

"And do you despise me?" asked Alcibiades gently.

"Yes, more than any of the others, for a man so gifted by the gods should be above the common weakness of men, and from all I have heard you are the maddest spirit in Athens and their leader in every kind of debauch. They tell me that even during the year before your election, when you made the Athenians believe you had become serious and continent, your house was never empty."

"Androcles, I suppose," he said tartly. "But he may tell it in the market-place if he likes. The Athenians believe what I choose they shall believe."

"You waste your time, however. And it is said you aim to be another Pericles! A man so calm and serious he was known as 'The Olympian.'"

"Pericles was a man like the rest of us, although he observed much discretion. He had had more than one woman in his life before he met Aspasia. She happened to satisfy him. Perhaps I too could be faithful did I meet a woman who combined all women in one."

He felt he had never told a more graceful lie, but he bent upon her a look of warm admiration, throwing into his eyes an expression of sudden hope.

She shrugged. "I will recline again. They are bringing in the wine." And she presented him with her back.

XXIV

THE fun was at its height. The women drank little, but the men dipped their cups freely into the kraters. The flute girls danced as they played, and the room resounded with drinking-songs, unless the women were telling amusing stories or exercising their wit on one man for the entertainment of the others. Nemea brushed "Setamon" unceremoniously aside and seated herself beside Alcibiades.

"My room is above this," she whispered. "It is large and even more beautiful." And she enumerated its rich perfections.

But wine had a peculiar effect upon Alcibiades. Instead of increasing his natural amorousness it inspired him to deeds the most freakish and reprehensible his fertile mind could conceive. One revel was much like another, and after a time mere drinking and singing palled; with none of his more prudent friends to restrain him, he was apt to vary the programme with some outrageous performance.

Ignoring Nemea, he sprang to his feet; steady enough, although his face was flushed and his eyes snapping.

"Send out the flute girls," he commanded; and when the door had closed behind them: "Promise secrecy by all the gods, and I will tell you what I have in mind."

"By all the gods," the men shouted, and sat up expectantly, for Alcibiades' imagination was always to be trusted, and like him they loved variety and any new form of excitement.

"Our Athenians have been very pious since the end of the war," he said with a sardonic laugh. "They went in full force to Eleusis last autumn and worshipped as never before, whether or not they were Initiates. We had other uses for our time, but it is meet that we too should pay homage to Demeter and Kora, for

where would our wine come from if the Earth-Mother deserted us ? Rise, Athenians, rise ! " And he deepened his voice and chanted :

Seaward, O Mystæ, Mystæ, to the sea.

For a moment there was an appalled silence. No festival was more sacred than the Mysteries of Eleusis where pilgrims went every year after purifying themselves in the sea. Demeter and her ravished daughter were as sacred as Zeus and Hera, and secretly more respected. Even the hetæræ gazed at Alcibiades in consternation.

Then the young men remembered they were the intellectuals of Athens and had laughed ancient superstitions out of court. Like Alcibiades they had been initiated in their earlier youth, but had long since ceased to join that solemn procession. What were gods but figments of man's nascent imagination, conceived in his own image when he was distinguished from the beasts of the forest by only a blind impulse to seek the protection of some force stronger than himself ?

Theodorus staggered to his feet. " Good ! Good ! " he cried. " You will be the Hierophant, Alcibiades. Give the rest of us our parts." And prudence and horror folded their wings.

Alcibiades, who had laughed aloud at their momentary hesitation, gave his orders. " You will be the Torch-bearer, Polytion. Theodorus the Herald. Meletus the Priest at the altar. The rest will be Mysts and Epopts. Nemea, you will be Demeter, as you are the fairest, and Damasandra, who is the smallest, will be Kora. That fierce black beard of Polystratus fits him for the part of Pluto. Niceratus, go without and get torches from our slaves, but do not light them, as we don't wish to set the house on fire. All of you take some small object in your arms and imagine it is a pig."

He snatched a tapestry from the wall and draped himself in it grandiloquently. To the shouts of the company he inverted an empty krater on his head, and then he formed them into a procession, and, preceded by the Torch-bearer, led them thrice round the room while all sang the hymn to Iacchus :

> **Iacchus, O Iacchus !**
> **Iacchus, O Iacchus !**
> **Let the mystic measure beat ;**
> **Come in riot fiery fleet ;**
> **Free and holy all before thee,**
> **And thy Mystæ wait the music of thy feet.**
> **Spirit, Spirit, lift the shaken**
> **Splendour of thy tossing torches !**
> **All the meadow flashes, scorches,**
> **Up, Iacchus, and awaken ! . . .**

And although they started the rite shrieking with laughter, so susceptible and impressionable were they, that before the long hymn was half over they were chanting it solemnly, their eyes lifted in exaltation. They recovered themselves, however, when they went through the motions of plunging into the sea—head first over the couches.

"Now to Eleusis," cried Alcibiades. "Each hold your torch aloft and imagine it is flaring in the darkness of the night, that we pass through tall olive groves, and the sea murmurs as we pace beside it, singing the hymn to Demeter."

The thirteen-mile march was over. Led by Alcibiades they entered the great outer hall of the Temple of Eleusis, ranged themselves on cushions, stone seats for the moment, while the Hierophant stood by a hastily improvised altar, flanked by the Priest, the Herald and the Torch-bearer, and mumbled vague promises of another and a better world. Then, with heads bowed they entered the Hall of Initiation.

Alcibiades gave brief peremptory orders. Nemea, Polystratus, and Damasandra moved to the end of the room to enact the drama of Demeter, Kora, and Pluto

as best they could. The ceremonies of the sacred and terrible inner temple of Eleusis were known only to the Initiates and had never been betrayed. It was a secret preserved with religious awe, and it is doubtful if any man who had been admitted to those final rites had ever been asked to violate the oath. Æschylus, for hinting at them in one of his dramas had so roused the horror and wrath of the multitude in the theatre that he had been forced to take refuge at the altar to save himself from being torn to pieces, and later had been banished. Even Alcibiades and this band of scoffers were not too intoxicated to remember that an oath was an oath, but there was a general impression, freely spoken of, that one of the lighter features of the initiation was a portrayal of the abduction of Kora by Pluto, and the despair of Demeter.

Nemea, determined to please Alcibiades, and as versatile as all Ionians, rose to the occasion, and gave a fair rendering of a mother's woe at the loss of a beloved and only daughter; and Damasandra, her small dark face twisted with terror, screamed realistically as the King of Hades flung her over his shoulder and made off.

The farce ended with everybody congratulating one another, Alcibiades in particular, and more wine was brought in. Nemea's eyes suddenly came to rest on the Egyptian.

Tiy had forgotten her rôle as Setamon and was standing against the wall, her figure drawn up to its full majestic height, an expression of profound contempt on her face. She felt as if her own gods had been violated, and could hardly contain her scorn of these men—ambitious Athenians all of them—who were acting like bad children in the absence of their parents.

Nemea sidled up to her. "You are too young to witness such a carousal, dear Setamon," she murmured sympathetically, veiling her eyes. "And, gods! how hot it is in here. Let us go out to the aula for a moment and get a breath of air."

Tiy was Setamon at once. She looked sullenly at the beautiful woman, no doubt in pursuit of a youthful victim.

"I am not warm," she said ungraciously. "I prefer to stay here. I have been much diverted, and I have been permitted to see little that is amusing in Egypt."

"But I feel faint," whispered Nemea. "Lead me forth, I beg of you."

There seemed nothing else to be done, and Tiy, taking her by the arm none too gently, led her out to the court.

Nemea suddenly stood erect. The moon was full in the clear Attic sky and the court as bright as day. She made a swift motion and caught at one of the panels of the head-dress. In a moment she would have torn it off, but no Athenian could think more quickly than Tiy. Nemea's arms were gripped with hands of steel, and she was shaken until her teeth chattered.

"You would seduce a mere boy," hissed Setamon. "Shame on you! But I have been brought up in contempt of loose women."

"I thought you were Tiy," faltered Nemea. "But no woman could be as strong as that." Then suspicion reawakened. "But you are very strong for a boy! I am told the men of Egypt are as weak as the women of other countries."

"Are there not strong women here and there in men's states? And the young men of Egypt exercise in secret. Now go and tell Alcibiades to come forth at once. My sister will be sitting up for me and enraged if I am late."

Nemea, glad to escape, and rubbing her arms, disappeared into the andron. When she gave her message to Alcibiades he went out at once, disregarding her whispered entreaties to return. He had thrown off the tapestry and found his mantle.

"And you have had enough?" he asked, laughing. "Well, so have I. Let us go."

"You will regret this to-morrow, Alcibiades," she said as they entered the street.

"I never regret," he said proudly. "Unless, to be sure, I fail in an undertaking, when a better plan would have brought me success."

"And suppose you are betrayed? Men are none too reticent when drunk. This performance of to-night may be told at some future banquet."

"We are never as drunk as you think. And no one there to-night will dare betray me, for they are all in the same boat. As for the hetæræ, they know better than to betray the secrets of men."

"You may drink your wine diluted," she said dryly, "but I notice you are none too steady on your feet." And she took his arm in a firm grip and propelled him rapidly through the dark streets, too narrow for the moon to penetrate; much to the amusement of the slaves following with torches and glancing anxiously in all directions for foot-pads.

When she reached her house she bade him good-night curtly and shut the door in his face. He shrugged his shoulders, half-turned to retrace his steps, yawned, and concluded to go to his own house. To Hades with all women.

XXV

He left Athens next day to go to the island of Eubœa, where he kept his racing stud. He had inherited half of the Alcmæonid horses from Pericles and bought the rest. At one time they had been removed to Andros, but brought back after the victory of Sphakteria, and Alcibiades rented the grazing lands from Pericles the Younger, as the pasture was richer than on his Attic properties.

Several of those horses had been pierced under him, others had died in the course of nature, or were too

old for racing, but they had been bred carefully and he now had some forty or fifty in magnificent condition. The chosen had been raced at the Panathenea and other festivals, had won many prizes, and were exercised frequently in the chariots. He cherished the ambition, common to all the young bloods of Greece, to win the chariot race at Olympia, that grand climax of the famous international festival held every four years in the state of Elis, but from which the Athenians had been excluded since the beginning of the war. The Eleans had bowed to the will of Sparta, but one of the provisions of the Treaty between the former enemies was that Athens should have free access to Olympia and Delphi; shrines at which they had worshipped and competed for over four hundred years.

The next festival would occur this summer, the ninetieth in the history of Olympia, and Alcibiades was not only determined to distinguish himself above all men but to put to shame the malicious stories flying up and down Hellas that Athens was too impoverished to compete.

There were times when Alcibiades really believed that he loved Athens better than himself, and others when, arrogant in his honesty as in all things, he was quite aware that he regarded her as the servant of his ambitions. But the two were inextricably mixed, and to glorify himself he must glorify Athens. Pericles had made the Acropolis a thing of grandeur and loveliness not only to gratify his own passion for beauty, but to create the impression abroad that Athens was a city of inexhaustible treasure-chests and therefore invincible.

The depleted revenues of the State forbade any such magnificent gesture for years to come, but the Olympian Festival was the most important and spectacular event in the western world, and Alcibiades was determined to take full advantage of it this summer. Every state in Hellas, and all the colonies and islands, would

send its Theôry or sacred legation to take part in its sacrifices and games, save only Sparta, who had a quarrel on hand with Elis and had been forbidden entrance to the precinct. Her wrath resounded throughout Hellas, but the sanctuary was the possession of Elis and it was within her right to exclude a state with whom she was at war, although for five days all the world was supposed to be at peace.

It was Alcibiades' intention to persuade the city fathers to send that part of the treasure which consisted of gold plate and vessels, to be displayed in the procession and while sacrificing at the altar of Zeus. The impression made could not fail to be immense and disconcerting.

Every young man in Hellas who could afford it was polishing up his chariot and exercising his horses. Alcibiades kept his intentions secret, but it was reasonably assumed he would eclipse every one else.

He took his brother Cleinias and Pericles the Younger with him to Eubœa. He saw little of either. Cleinias and his friend Cristobulus moved in a different circle and were indifferent to politics and hetæræ. Young Pericles spent much of his time with Socrates and studied the art of generalship under Dionydorus. Severely handicapped by the great reputation of his father, sensitive and retiring, he hoped one day to distinguish himself in war ; and if he lacked the genius to add lustre to his name on the Bema, at least he would do nothing to tarnish it. He had loved and admired Alcibiades extravagantly since childhood, but the two had little in common and rarely sought each other. Alcibiades occasionally remembered that he had always been fond of the boy, six years his junior in years and immeasurably in experience, and invited him to go to Eubœa and inspect the Alcmæonid horses. He included Cleinias in the present expedition as the young man had been ill and the sea would do him good. He had even less in common with him

than with Young Pericles, for he detested effeminate men, but a brother was a brother.

They started from Piræus on a warm bright morning. There was no wind to fill the sail, but the seamen rowed briskly down the Bay of Phaleron and after a long pull entered the straits between Point Sunion and Ceos, the nearest of the Cyclades: that strange scattered group of islands, more than twenty in number, once, no doubt, part of the mainland, and shaken free in some terrific convulsion of nature.

This part of Greece was an irregular mass of lovely islands, bays, headlands, mountains, and waterways, with temples among the grey olive groves and green pines. And to-day the sky was as blue as the sea, surely the richest blue of any sky or sea in all Europe. The rowers sang, and called gaily to the fishermen plying their trade in the bountiful waters of the Ægean.

And all this beauty and fertility, save only Melos, but a blur far away, was under the ægis of Athens, freed at last from all dread of the Peloponnesus, spreading its dark length behind them in the west. Alcibiades experienced one of his rare moments of pride in and love for his State, quite aside from its value to himself and his ambitions. The most beautiful and the most famous country in all the world, no man could gainsay that. And small as it was it had twice repulsed the Persian hordes, placed itself at the head of a great Empire, and now had forced peace upon the enemy at home. Its numbers were insignificant, but its spirit was godlike, and it had created and maintained the greatest of all navies.

"Why are you flashing your eyes about like that?" asked Cleinias querulously. He was lying under a canopy, his girlishly beautiful face drawn into an expression of dissatisfaction, for his brother had not provided enough cushions. "You look as if you were congratulating yourself on your vast possessions!"

"Perhaps I was," said Alcibiades whimsically. "Who knows?"

"And are you thinking of making yourself Tyrant, as people are beginning to whisper?"

"Why do you listen to such nonsense?"

"Are you not Alcibiades? You have tried to rule everybody since the day you were born. I was little more than your slave when we were children, and I'd be in no better condition now if I didn't take good care to keep out of your way. Who should know you better than I? I remember well that night at dinner when you gave yourself the airs of Pericles and threw a plate of salad at Xanthippus because we dared laugh, and then beat me afterward."

But he smiled as he remembered this old grievance, for he liked to recall the care-free days of his childhood when that inner court of Pericles' house bounded his horizon and he knew naught of the dubiety of life and the insincerity of men.

Alcibiades smiled also. He had no regrets for his own childhood; life was far too interesting, and his mind was always leaping to the future, but it was his habit to humour his brother, who was inclined to be petulant. He disliked quarrelling about nothing.

"You were a pretty boy," he said. "Perhaps I was jealous. And you were too near my own age." He threw him his own cushions. "I have slept too often on the hard ground to mind the deck of a galley."

He turned to his other guest, who was standing on the small deck with his feet well apart, and staring out over the Ægean. The young man had not inherited the beauty of Aspasia nor the strong characteristic features of Pericles, but he was handsome in a sombre way and his hair and eyes were as black as his father's had been. His fate was to be a tragic one, and as his gaze roved in the direction of Arginusæ, not even a blur in the north-east, perhaps he had a sudden

veiled premonition, for his shoulders drooped and he heaved a deep involuntary sigh.

"Now what is the matter with *you*?" asked Alcibiades gaily. "You cannot be thinking of my youthful peccadillos, for I always made a great pet of you and often was reproached by Aspasia for spoiling her good little boy."

Pericles dropped down beside him. "I have only the pleasantest and most affectionate memories, dear Alcibiades," he said warmly. "And no man would dare say aught against you in my presence."

"But you will not join my club and work with me. Why not? You have a good mind, well sharpened by Socrates, who loves you more than he ever did me. I should value your counsel."

Young Pericles shook his head. "I have little talent for politics, and, to be quite frank, I dislike most of your associates. But be sure, Alcibiades, that if you are ever in need of my services they are yours to command. I have sometimes wished misfortune would overtake you that I could prove how truly I love you."

"Now, don't begin to croak, Pericles," said Alcibiades teasingly. "You have been associating too much with Euripides, who would make us all romantic and sentimental. And that is not the Greek character."

"Homer was romantic and sentimental enough," retorted Pericles with spirit. "And if we once were so we may be again. And what of Sappho, but two hundred years dead?"

"Well, we are not now," said Alcibiades with decision. "And never have the Athenians been as great as since the death of Hippias, developed as they have been under free democratical institutions. Democracy has done that much for us, at all events. May we always remain so. I want no softening of the Athenian character."

"I do not believe that in our depths we are changed,"

persisted Pericles, who had been trained by Socrates to pursue an argument to its bitter end. "Do not parents still love their children with passion, and sometimes each other? Do they not suffer as passionately when death visits the house? Are not men ready and glad to make every sacrifice for the beloved friend? Do not two men who love greatly look forward with exaltation to the hour when they may die side by side in battle? If we were as changed as you think we would love no one but ourselves——"

"Love no one but ourselves!" interrupted Cleinias. "What of Alcibiades? Do you deny, my gorgeous brother, that you have ever loved any one but yourself? You, to my mind, are the Greek epitome."

Alcibiades laughed. "I should never think of denying it. Do not Greeks look facts in the face? I am the most selfish man in Athens, and that is saying a good deal. That is the secret of my power to-day. May I ever be spared the lamentable weakness of altruism."

"Take care it is not your undoing," said Pericles sadly. "But if ever there is a time of need, you will not forget me, Alcibiades?"

Alcibiades slapped him lightly on the shoulder. "Be sure of that, dear Pericles. If I am ever given the cup I shall expect you to quaff it for me. Hemlock must have a foul bitter taste." But he was touched more than he would admit, for he knew this young relative was the only one of all the friends and flatterers that surrounded him who would make any real sacrifice in his behalf. Even Axiochus would hesitate to imperil his own life or fortune, and Pericles would give all he had.

He changed the subject hastily. "We enter the next bay, and then for the horses."

They were rowing up the Euripus, the straits that separated the long island of Eubœa from Attica and Bœotia. Half an hour later they were in a wide valley

of the mountain range and gazing admiringly at the horses trotted out for inspection. They were in superb condition as usual, and as spirited as if they had never known a rein.

Alcibiades had his favourites harnessed four abreast and staged a miniature race, criticizing sharply. His trainers and charioteers were the best in Hellas and as ambitious as their master. But Alcibiades was never satisfied. He would have had them supernal; but on the whole he was convinced that drivers more carefully reckless or more accomplished would not be seen at Olympia that year.

He gave his final instructions in private, much to the annoyance of Cleinias, who had promised certain of his friends he would find out how many chariots Alcibiades intended to enter. The usual number was one with four horses; rich men sometimes doubled the number, but there was no telling where Alcibiades would stop. He read him a lecture during the homeward journey on the dangers of extravagance and ostentation, hoping to pique that lordly being into betraying himself; but Alcibiades only laughed and gave him no satisfaction. He subsided into a sulky silence while the other two exchanged gay reminiscences of those stormy days in the inner court when even Aspasia could not keep the peace.

When Alcibiades returned to his house he discovered that he had no engagement for the evening and sent for Nemea.

XXVI

THE Acropolis, which had once been the citadel of Athens, still housed the treasure chests of gold and silver plate, censers, trophies, rare and beautiful utensils of all descriptions. It was guarded day and night by fifty citizen archers, although thieves for the most part were too superstitious to venture on sacred ground.

Alcibiades had been making a visit of inspection

with the archons and certain members of the Council. They had demurred at sending their most precious possessions out of Athens, but he had had his way as usual. After all, as he reminded them, they had appointed him first Theôrus, and he would defray all expenses.

As he turned toward the Propylæa, the one secular building on the hill whose five great gates gave entrance to the Acropolis, he saw Tiy, followed by her Nubian, approaching from the western portico of the temple of Athenè Parthenos, and hastened to meet her.

Tiy disdained to veil herself in public, and although she walked abroad frequently she was never molested. The Nubian alone would have protected her, but by this time it was well known to every one in the little city that her social status was no longer a matter of speculation. And what else was to be expected of an Egyptian ?

Alcibiades had one of his sudden inspirations. There was but one way to win this woman. He must impose himself on her mentally. He must give her the companionship she no doubt found in Thebes with other exceptional women and missed in Athens. Tiy must be made to understand that of all men she had met here in Athens Alcibiades alone was her equal. The siege might be a long one, for she was wary and proud and despised men. But women in Egypt loved men even as normal men desired women ; and perhaps even more, for there was a weakness inherent in women that was beyond their power to control. They bore children and with that function went the instinct of surrender.

And he was satisfied for the moment with Nemea.

He gave her a friendly smile. " Well met," he said. " It was my intention to go to your house this afternoon to say good-bye for a time, for I leave to-morrow for Olympia. I am afraid you will be lonely, for there'll hardly be a man left in Athens."

"Would I could go, too," she said impatiently. "I was as thrilled as any of you when I heard the Herald from Elis proclaiming the commencement of the 'Olympian truce,' 'during which all violation of the Elean territory by an armed force is a sin against the majesty of Zeus.' He had a fine sonorous voice, and he said it so many times I remember every word of it. But why cannot I go? Why should you exclude women from all that is interesting?"

"Alas, for the power of tradition! That sacred soil would be polluted! Even Aspasia has never been, although she rebelled when Pericles left her for Olympia or Delphi, and stamped her foot—a feminine act to which, of course, you would never condescend."

"No? Why? I can quite imagine Alcibiades stamping his foot. For he is more spoiled than any woman, and no doubt can be as impatient and petulant."

Alcibiades laughed. "Ask Saon! He has the benefit of all my tempers. I spare my friends as much as possible."

"You mean you are more on your guard, lest your ascendancy be threatened. But I imagine you are naturally good-humoured, and their adoration is too profound at present to admit of any desire to cross you. Let us go in out of the sun."

"You should carry a parasol," he said, but Tiy merely curled her lip, and they crossed the portico with its great Dorian columns and entered the north wing of the Propylæa.

It was cool and quiet in the Pinakotheka, and they wandered among the graceful Ionic pillars that upheld the lofty roof, and examined the heroic paintings of Polygnotos, the statues and votive offerings, all of them beautiful works of art. Pericles was there, dominating even in marble; graces, gods, and goddesses either in sculpture or painted on marble and terra-cotta; and through the open door could be seen

the statue of Athenè Hygieia which Pericles had ordered to confirm the Athenians in their belief that he had saved the life of a humble citizen after the Goddess of Health had given him the prescription in a dream.

"He was a clever old fox," said Alcibiades irreverently. "A pupil of Anaxagoras and Damon, he freed himself early of superstition, but it was one of his favourite weapons in managing the people. I have no hesitation in following his example. When all men are wise there will be no rulers."

"And life would be tame for the Alcibiadeses! Why has this creature no tongue?"

They had paused before a brazen lioness whose mouth was an empty cavern.

It was years since Alcibiades had given more than a glance at the works of art on the Acropolis, but his old pædagogus had amused the boys with the legends of the country, and he had a long memory.

"It is said to have been wrought in honour of Leæna, the favourite of Aristogeiton. We had a great Tyrant here a hundred or more years ago who was succeeded unworthily by his sons Hippias and Hipparchus. The last incurred the bitter enmity of a young noble named Harmodius by an act of cruelty to himself and a public insult to his sister. His intimate friend was Aristogeiton, and the two formed a plot to slay the Tyrants, but were betrayed and executed. Leæna was put to the torture before Aristogeiton was captured, and as she refused to speak her tongue was cut out."

And then he proceeded to embellish the story in order to prolong the sparkle in her eyes and the melting curves of her mouth.

"You listen with much sympathy," he said teasingly. "Surely Tiy would never suffer torture for a mere man!"

"Tiy admires fidelity and courage in man or woman,"

she said warmly. "And if I had been alive in those days and conditions I should have done even as Leæna. After all, she was friend as well as lover."

"True, but she would not have sacrificed her tongue for a woman. Only a woman in love with a man may rise to heights of heroism. I doubt if you can understand that."

"I understand more than you think," and her eyes held an angry flash. "After all, we Egyptians were once like other women. We inherit memories as well as bodies—are not some of your men effeminate enough? That, too, is an inheritance, dormant in most men of your kind but released by who knows what secret disturbance of a balance contrived not so much by nature as by circumstance. That there is little difference between the sexes is proved by the fact that in our State and others the women after many generations of dominance are strong and the men weak. We have among us women whom we call masculine as a term of reproach, and who correspond to your effeminate men. But each of us, I think, has her inheritance, however overlaid. So I am quite able to understand how Leæna, inheriting the courage of an epoch when women ruled in Greece and fought in battle, and now having nothing in her life but love of one man, submitted to torture rather than betray him to his death. What a pity it was all for naught! . . . But I wonder if her sacrifice would have been rewarded had both escaped? Would Ar—your Greek names are so long! Would any man continue to love a tongueless woman?"

"Ask Socrates!" he said gaily. "Socrates, who is married to Xanthippe! He would say it was a gift from Olympus. . . . But——"

"But would Alcibiades be too honest for mere cynicism?" she asked dryly.

Alcibiades' eyes, whose range of expression was infinite, betrayed only candour and wondering admiration. "I'd not dare to lie to you," he said earnestly.

"No, my love would never survive deformity. Even should I love you, O Tiy—which may the gods forbid! —I'd love you no longer did you lose those beautiful teeth or the lovely line of your nose. Even more than I love power I worship beauty—or I think I do—now. Perhaps as I grow older power will mean more to me than perfection of line. But even were I then still capable of love it would not survive so grotesque a thing as mutilation."

She looked at him sharply, then shrugged. "I know nothing of the arts of men. You look just now as if a lie would shrivel your own tongue, and while I believe your words to be true enough—oh, yes!—I doubt the motive that prompted them. I have a strong suspicion that you looked as innocent when you persuaded those Spartans to betray their mission so shamefully."

"Ah! And why do you suspect me of inducing those men to betray their trust? If you have been listening to gossip it is that and nothing more. I take no man into my full confidence."

"I have heard no gossip. But I was at my window and saw the astounded faces of those men when you were denouncing them on the Bema . . . and drew my conclusions."

He saw his opportunity and grasped it. "You were right!" he cried, admiration flooding his eyes. "And to you I'll not deny it, for I doubt if you have it in you to upbraid me. No one can know better than you that in affairs of state the truth at all times would be fatal. Yes, I deliberately deceived those men, Tiy, and I did it for the advantage of Athens. If I had let them follow the advice of the Council and state frankly to the Ecclesia they had come with full powers of settlement, I should have weakened the State and gained nothing. I tell you this in confidence and it gives me a pleasure I cannot express, for I trust no man, as I told you, and often feel a deep need of some

one in whom I can confide utterly. I recognize in you a mind as ruthless as my own. Would that I had always the benefit of your advice!"

She had been looking at him searchingly, but she was no match for this consummate actor. For that matter he was so sincere in his desire to win her intimate friendship that it gave his tones the ring of truth.

She held out her hand impulsively.

"I will ever respect your confidence, Alcibiades. And it flatters me greatly. Yes, like you, I would hesitate at nothing—so it would advantage Egypt. I know well that rulers may not be as other men; although I have a great love of truth and am impatient when compelled to resort to subterfuge."

"And I! It angers me when I am forced to stoop. But will you let me come to you when I return from Olympia? And at an hour when your house is empty? There is so much pending I would discuss with you."

Her eyes flashed again, and this time without remonstrance. "Ah, then indeed would my visit to Athens be interesting. And to be consulted by Alcibiades would be an honour of which I should cherish the memory always."

"What an admission from the haughty Egyptian! Or, like the others, do you think it necessary to flatter me?" And his eyes were as searching as hers had been a moment since.

"I was quite sincere—and not in the least humble. After all, you are a great man and the world admits it. Why should not I? Would not Socrates himself be flattered? Or Gorgias, who trails through the streets with half Athens at his heels? Now, remain here while I find my slave and return to my house. There is just one convention in Athens I respect: I walk the streets with no man. I wish you great good fortune at Olympia."

She walked with her long leisurely step down the

room while Alcibiades watched her with a whole regiment of expressions marching through his eyes.

XXVII

Why Zeus, almighty god of Olympus, selected the remote Ionian coast for his earthly headquarters when central Hellas abounded in exquisite vales under the cool shadow of mountains, was a question asked every four years by exasperated Greeks. Moreover, for an equally inscrutable reason he had appointed midsummer when the sun was at its hottest and flies, fleas, and mosquitoes most active, as a time for men who would worship at his shrine to tramp, ride, drive, or languish in galleys without a breath of wind to fill the sail.

But so, and far back in the mists of time, he had ordained, and so it was. And greatly to the satisfaction of the Eleans. It gave their small state an importance that made even Athens sigh with envy, and replenished their treasure chests so often depleted in war. Visitors came not only from Hellas proper and the cities of Asia Minor, once its colonies, from the wealthier islands of the Ægean, the Hellespont and the Propontis in the north, but from the Greek cities on the eastern coast of Italy and Sicily, and as far away as Messalia and Cyrene. The Bay of Kyllene could hardly accommodate their galleys. The Eleans, however, were as devout and active worshippers as any.

The rivers were dry in summer. The meadows of the narrow valley were parched and inhospitable. Far in the distance rose the snow-crowned chains of Erymanthus and Kyllene, but the only elevation in Olympia to speak of was Kronos Hill, which rose directly behind the Altis or sacred precinct.

But the beauty of that famed enclosure compensated for every discomfort and filled every heart with awe and admiration. Surrounded by a wall, it covered several acres, and not far from its centre rose the

ancient Doric temple of Zeus, built of massive blocks, the white marble tiles of the roof supporting gilded vases and urns. It was for this temple that Pheidias had created his great gold and ivory statue of Zeus whose majestic head touched the roof, and excelled in size and magnificence even his Athenè Parthenos on the Acropolis of Athens.

There was a large Festal Square under the eastern portico of the Altis, but the rest of the enclosure was crowded with marble temples, altars, olive trees: among them the sacred tree brought from the "dark fountain of Istar" by Hercules; statues of gods and Olympian victors. The row of Treasure Houses was under the northern wall, and the Altar of Zeus, where the public sacrifices were made, stood close to the Square.

It was an oasis for gods and Greeks to be proud of, and even when crowded voices rarely rose above a murmur. But outside all was turmoil, noise, and heat. Tents dotted the long narrow valley, rows of booths had been erected by the Eleans for enterprising shop-keepers from all parts, hawkers shouted their wares, conjurors ran about soliciting attention, acrobats engaged in playful wrestling. Men of all ages and degrees had come to Olympia, and the place swarmed with beggars. The poor had tramped the weary miles, begging a ride now and again in some farmer's mule-cart.

Alcibiades' galley had brought him and his friends to the Bay of Kyllene, and horses the rest of the way; there was no chariot road from the coast. A long, thirsty, ugly, monotonous ride, with the horses fetlock-deep in dust, and a hot wind filling eyes, nose, hair, with sand that finally penetrated the clothing and irritated the skin.

Slaves had gone on ahead and his large silken tent awaited him under the shadow of the low hill divided by a deep cleft from Kronion. His guests were

Critias, Aristophanes, Axiochus, and Young Pericles. They arrived the day before the ceremonies began, and after a grateful bath threw themselves on the couches, while slaves fanned away the flies and created a gentle breeze.

"Trust you, Alcibiades," said Aristophanes yawning, "to provide luxury even in Olympia. I was a boy when here last, but I remember I spent most of my time catching fleas, and my father beat me because I cried with the heat. I suppose all the flies in Olympia will settle on my bald head."

"How many chariots have you entered?" asked Axiochus eagerly. "You might tell us now."

"Oh, for Zeus' sake, stop talking. I want to sleep. Saon, give me a wet cloth for my head."

"And what of us?" cried Aristophanes. "What of our poor heads? A nice host you are to think only of your empty pate."

"Oh, go stick your head in the water jar," said Alcibiades peevishly. "And may it choke you."

Five cooling bandages were applied, and a few moments later gentle snores mingled with the swish of the fans.

The ceremonies began at dawn with the sacrifices at the Altar of Zeus. Only the Theôri (and bulls) could be admitted to the Altis, but the walls and hills, the roofs of the public buildings beyond the enclosure, were crowded with spectators. Alcibiades had imposed his will on the Eleans at the signing of the Treaty, and the Athenian Theôrus had the honour of placing the first hind-quarters of a bull on the altar. As the smoke rolled upward and the priests lifted their voices in a sonorous chant that could be heard far away on the plain, the golden treasure of Athens caught the rays of the rising sun as it was held aloft by reverent hands.

Alcibiades, his eyes roving, saw the astonished and

envious glances of even the Syracusans, who, secure in the universal knowledge of their superior wealth, had refrained from making an unusual display. The Corinthians scowled ; the proud Thessalians, who lived their lives on horseback and knew little of splendour, felt no envy, but congratulated themselves they were on good terms with Athens.

Theôri had come from all parts of the Greek world, even from as far north as Byzantium, and the morning was far spent when the sacrifices were over. The roasted meat was carried out and given to the athletes who were to compete in the Stadium on the following days, and were enjoying one day of rest after ten months of hard and relentless practice.

The great procession took place in the afternoon and again the place of honour was given to the Athenians, the Theôri holding the treasure on uplifted palms. Once more walls, hills, and roofs were crowded, and even the high rims of Stadium and Hippodrome ; crowds followed the procession, some climbing on the shoulders of the taller, and even leaping into the air to get a better view.

But the cynosure of all eyes was not the glittering treasure, nor yet the gorgeous robes of the priests. It was Alcibiades. He led the procession.

He could put on any expression he chose, and as he marched with head thrown back, his " steadfast god-like eyes " regarding the empyrean, his face was as serene and noble in its beauty as if no mortal passion had ever crossed it. His gold-bronze curls outglittered the plate, and his tall figure, both symmetrical and majestic, was one for all men to follow. For the first time in public he wore his purple mantle, and far from looking the leader of a Demos, he might have been a king entering his city after erecting ten trophies.

The crowd, even those whose States hated Athens, gave vent to cries of admiration and shouted his name. Some there were who muttered sharp criticism at the

prominence given him and the colour of his mantle; and Diogenes, the wealthiest citizen of Syracuse, a short fat man, very hot, whose Theôrus had been forced to take a second place, gnashed his teeth. But for five days all men, of whatever state or party, gathered at Olympia were theoretically at peace, and he was forced, like many another, to consume his wrath. The day was Alcibiades'. Did Zeus wish to attract attention to himself he must burst forth in lightning and thunder.

"It will be a marvel if he doesn't incur the wrath of every god on Olympus," growled Androcles to Phæax, with whom he was marching. "The jealous gods will smite him yet."

"I would prefer an earthly vengeance and be its instrument," said Phæax sourly. "The gods take long naps and often wake up when a man's hate has grown cold and his mind is old and weary with scheming. Remember Pericles. For nearly forty years that traitor to his blood had his way—and then died peacefully in bed."

"But he must have had many hours of suffering and humiliation at the end," said Androcles eagerly. "His enemies had vengeance at last."

"But think of those long years when they were powerless. Think if Alcibiades has inherited the Alcmæonid luck. He looks as if he were the son of Zeus himself and as beloved as Apollo. A pleasant prospect, should that be—and it may, for it has happened before." Phæax was not one of the young intellectuals.

"Put gods out of the question. I used them as a figure of speech. Pericles was a man of few weaknesses, or what he had he learned to control. Alcibiades has many and glories in them. We have only to watch and wait. Sooner or later he will deliver himself into our hands."

"How long are you going to keep up this pretence

of friendship with him ? " asked Phæax. " It would be more honest to leave his club and join mine or another."

" If I declared myself his enemy he would have me watched, and now I can watch him. The closer I am to him the more likely I may be to fathom that unfathomable mind. Apparently too arrogant to be anything but frank, I believe he takes no one, not even Critias, into his full confidence. If he cherishes the ambition to make himself Tyrant he has given not a hint of it in the club."

" Well, he can get very drunk, so be on the watch. I give him the closest attention in the Ecclesia, and at the first sign of any such intention I shall stand up and denounce him. But so far he has said nothing his worst enemy could twist."

" He is infernally clever. But I rely on his arrogance and vanity, to say nothing of his ambition. Sooner or later they will turn his head completely round on his shoulders. Gods, it is hot ! Why may not men carry parasols ? "

XXVIII

The pig had one acorn
But he wanted to get the other,
And I have one pretty maid
But I want to get the other,

sang Aristophanes at his morning toilet.

" How virtuous of you," mumbled Critias, who was struggling with the clasps of his red Laconian shoes. " Socrates read me a lecture an hour long the other day because I am running after young Eurythedemus. He would have us as old and wise as himself with all our passions in our head."

" Poor old Socrates," said Alcibiades, who, already dressed, was standing in the door of the tent watching the animated scene without. " Always agonizing

over the world he cannot reform. I have treated him shamefully this last year and vow I'll look him up as soon as I return to Athens."

"If you do you'll be lectured not for an hour but a day. He thinks you are aiming straight for the embrace of Pluto."

Alcibiades laughed. Never had he felt in such a good humour with all the world. "Then I'll make him happy by agreeing with him and listening humbly to his lecture."

"My mother wishes you would see him oftener," said Young Pericles eagerly. "She too sees little of you since you have become a great person."

"Dear goddess! I'll kiss the hem of her mantle the day I return to Athens.—Saon!"

"Yes, Master." The man, who had been making the beds, came forward.

"You have been gossiping with all the slaves in Olympia, of course. What rare delicacies has Diogenes the Syracusan in his larder?"

"He has peacocks' tongues, preserved I know not how; a rare variety of mushrooms, cakes made of Naxian almonds, goose-livers, tiny ducklings, rare Thasian wine——"

"Aha! I thought so. Now listen. I shall win the chariot-race, and in the evening I shall give a great banquet. I wish those delicacies for my own table. You will either bribe the Syracusan's cook or steal them. Understand?"

"Y-e-s—Master—but it may be very difficult."

"Alcibiades takes no excuses. It is for you to see that his banquet on that great night surpasses all others in Olympia."

Three of the young men shouted with delight, but Young Pericles assumed he was joking, and having finished his toilet went forth.

"Why are you so sure of winning the race?" demanded Critias. "There are many fine horses here

and experienced charioteers. We may yet offer sacrifice to Poseidon Hippias, for we have bet heavily on you. You might give us peace of mind."

It was Alcibiades' turn to burst into song.

> Know ye the land of the fair Proserpine
> Where the cottabus plashes the ominous wine
> And the lightest and handsomest cars . . . cars . . . cars . . .

He waggled his fingers not far from his nose at Critias, the author of this and many nonsense verses, left the tent, and, immediately the most dignified figure in Olympia, joined the throng that was moving toward the Stadium. A place had been reserved for him facing the seats of the Judges, and like them he wore purple. The Judges frowned. Diogenes of Syracuse, who sat near by, but not in the centre, as was assuredly the right of the richest man present, spread out his scarlet gold-embroidered mantle, and wished that he, too, had worn purple. He had refrained solely out of deference to the Judges.

Opposite the Judges and above the Theôri, sitting on a white altar, and heavily veiled, was the only woman present, the Priestess of the temple of Demeter in Elis.

The Stadium held thirty-eight thousand people, but offered little comfort to the spectators. There were no wooden seats and they sat on narrow levelled planes of the high artificial embankment, or disposed themselves as best they could on Kronion and the adjoining hills.

But seats were reserved for the Theôri and other distinguished visitors in the central row of the two embankments, and at this early hour they wore their himatia and made a brave display of colour; the Corinthians, Byzantines, and Syracusans flashing jewelled clasps on their shoulders. The Athenians flanked Alcibiades and he exchanged greetings with the members of his club and other friends, and even threw

a careless nod to Phæax, Thessalus, and Hyperbolus—who bared their teeth in the smile of truce.

Callias was there in all his magnificence, accompanied by his brother Hermogenes, Protagoras, Gorgias, several minor but learned sophists who lived on his bounty, and his favourite of the moment, young Autolycus, an athlete of striking beauty, who had distinguished himself at the last Panathenea. Nicias was not present. He had no heart for Olympia, nor desire to be cast further into the shade by Alcibiades. Antiphon and other Oligarchs of his years sat as far from that purple mantle as possible and took care to be trapped into no greetings, however formal.

The Stadium instead of being oval was oblong and open at either end. In an earlier time the distance for runners was once up the course—six hundred and forty-one feet—but for the last two hundred years they had doubled and redoubled, sometimes covering three thousand yards.

The first race was always to the boys, youths over twelve but not yet eighteen. When the Stadium and hills were crowded to their utmost capacity the Herald blew a blast on his trumpet, and four boys, naked, oiled, and sprinkled with sand, were led out from an underground passage. The Herald shouted: "Let the runners put their feet to the line," and they took their places in the grooved stone alertly. Another blast, and, their arms working like windmills, they were off, encouraged by the shouts of their Theôri and the lilting strains of a hundred flutes. Being so young they were allowed to run half the course only, but before they had gone a hundred yards their forms were almost indistinguishable in the cloud of dust kicked up from the loose, sandy floor. However, when one outdistanced the others, he was identified by the watcher at the goal, his name pronounced, and he trotted back to the clapping of many hands. There were four races and then one between the victors of each, which

was the real competition. It was won by a young Corinthian, and caked with dirt, his eyes barely open, he stood before the Judges and received the palm of victory. Every man present applauded him and shouted his name. He was the champion boy athlete of the Ninetieth Olympiad. At the end of the Festival he would be given an olive branch from the tree planted by Hercules, to lay on the altar of the patron god of his city when he returned there in triumph.

Wrestlers followed. More naked shining bodies soon to be caked with a mud composed of oil, sweat, and sand, but kicking up less dust and giving an exhibition both superb and graceful of rippling muscles, skill, and endurance.

Then came the discus-throwers, spear-throwers, experts in the long running jump; and the foot-race, which excited the maximum of enthusiasm. Some of the games were indecisive. Runners either failed to reach the end of the long race or were too evenly matched. But the Athenian came out ahead.

The day grew hotter and hotter. The men threw off their mantles and sat in their linen or thin woollen chitons. Vendors forced their way among the seats and sold small flagons of wine, loaves, olives, and cheese in wicker baskets. But neither heat nor dust could wither the enthusiasm of the spectators. They clapped and roared, sprang to their feet in breathless excitement as the wrestlers clinched in what looked like a death-struggle, or were lost in ecstatic contemplation of the beautiful attitudes of the discus-throwers and the long flying slim bodies of the jumpers. Politics, racial enmities, local pride, all were forgotten. Their passionate love of sport swamped their very personalities and they were supremely satisfied but never sated. Even Alcibiades was a Greek and nothing more. Nevertheless, when two Athenians were handed the palm, one for discus-throwing and one for the foot-race—second only in importance to

the chariot-race—his satisfaction was immeasurably enhanced.

The games ended for the day in mid-afternoon, and as the crowd was pouring out of the Stadium a disturbing rumour flew about like a bird of ill-omen. "The vengeful Spartans were approaching from the south, and a regiment of cavalry and another of hoplites had been sent to the border."

"Alcibiades," said Aristophanes, as they hastened to the cool shade of their tent, "did you put the Eleans up to this stupid and dangerous policy of excluding the Spartans?"

"Now, what makes you think that?" asked Alcibiades innocently. "The Eleans have grievance enough of their own—and you ought to be thankful to be spared the sight of those dirty unkempt Spartans, to say nothing of their shocking manners. They'd elbow us out of our very seats and raise a row if their men were beaten in the Stadium."

"You haven't answered my question, and I suppose you will not. But don't go too far, Alcibiades, and wreck the peace. You have imperilled it enough already, but it may be that your treatment of those envoys was what they deserved. I may hate Sparta, but I hate war more, and if I thought you were seeking to promote another for your own ends—well, I tell you here plainly——"

"No politics in Olympia! It is forbidden by Zeus. Saon—the bath! The bath!"

XXIX

Runners came every hour from the frontier with the news that nothing had been seen of the Spartans, but the shadow still hovered over Olympia next morning and every man carried his dagger to the Stadium. They soon forgot the threatened danger, however, for

this was the day of boxing and the pankration, the most brutal of all sports. The contestants, of whom there were twenty pairs in succession, were not young Greeks of the higher class, but free born, nevertheless, and of good character, else they would not have been permitted to take part at the sacred Festival of Olympia.

The boxers carried a weight in each hand fastened to the wrist with sharp thongs. In both games they alternated the swinging and downward stroke with a sudden attack on the top of the head, and clinched in the pankration. It was a day of broken heads, broken fingers, lacerated bodies, ears torn off, blood, and even death. Agathon and Cleinias fainted, the one in the arms of his Pausanias, the other tenderly supported by Cristobulus; the mass revelled in the display of brute strength.

By mid-afternoon they were glutted, and those who did not hasten to the bath lingered in the streets of the town discussing the possibility of a Spartan invasion, or gathered about rhapsodists seated on stools and reciting from Homer or modern poets; others listened to ambitious playwrights and orators. Gorgias mounted a pedestal before the temple of Zeus and expounded his philosophy of "absolute and systematic doubt" to those in need of intellectual refreshment.

But the Spartans did not come, nor any word of them, and on the fourth day of the Festival that vast concourse went cheerfully to the Stadium to witness the final contests by the victors, and races of men in armour.

That ended the games in the Stadium. On the following and last day the great event of the Festival would take place: chariot-racing in the Hippodrome.

Alcibiades, instead of hastening to his tent, lingered at the entrance of the Stadium until the Syracusan Theôrus emerged. The Crœsus of Sicily gave him

a regal stare, but Alcibiades, nowise abashed, assumed a charming deference. It was not the first time they had met, for he had visited Syracuse and dined with the great man.

"Greetings, O Diogenes," he said in his gentle winning tones. "The crowd has kept us apart heretofore, but to-day I was determined to speak to you and ask you to honour my banquet to-morrow night. It has been my great sorrow that you have never visited Athens and permitted me to return your splendid hospitality, in however humble a fashion. I beg therefore you will make me the proudest man in Olympia by sharing my couch on the last night of this great festival."

The Syracusan hesitated, a curling lip arrested. He was a good-natured man and he had always liked this remarkable young Athenian; he had no grievance against him save that he had been denied precedence here at Olympia in his favour. Perhaps that was due to no demand of his; the Eleans may have had their reasons for seeking to propitiate in all ways the head of the Athenian State. Moreover, he was greatly mellowed by the games, and one of his men had received the palm.

And Alcibiades had never been more radiant with charm, nor more exquisitely deferential.

"I do not know," he began. "I had intended to give a banquet myself to-morrow night——"

"There will be a hundred banquets given. Unless you have invited your guests long since you will find none worthy to recline at your tables. Let me hope you have delayed too long!"

"It is true—I put it off——"

"And at mine you will meet the flower of Athens—young men as eager as I to do you honour. Oh, Diogenes, I beg you will come!"

The rich man's round red face melted into a gratified smile. Too accustomed to summon his guests at the

last moment, he had forgotten that these other rich men in Olympia would not be at his beck. And to have the great Alcibiades plead for his company tickled his vanity. Moreover, far from young himself, the prospect of an evening in the society of the young bloods of Athens, who probably would tell many good stories and sing many ribald songs, promised a pleasant diversion to his jaded palate. Above all, it gratified his pride to reflect that Alcibiades could set before him but the simple fare of the Athenians, and must recall with some mortification the rare and costly delicacies offered him in Syracuse.

"Very well," he said graciously. "I accept your invitation."

"Now indeed am I the happiest man in Olympia!" cried Alcibiades in tones of unmistakable sincerity. "And bring two of your suite. Alas, that my tent will not hold all, as I could wish. I thank and salute you, O Diogenes. Until to-morrow night."

XXX

THE spectators had left their mantles at home after the first day and sat through the long hot hours in their chitons. Some had removed even these and found comfort in their skins. But on this day of days they were stately once more in gracefully draped white or coloured himatia, determined to brave the heat until the end.

And their minds at last were free of apprehension. Horsemen, penetrating far into the south, had brought back the welcome news that no troops had moved out of Sparta. If she had had any intention of disturbing the great Festival and incurring the wrath of Zeus, she had prudently dismissed it.

The vast Hippodrome was no more luxurious than the Stadium, but by this time the visitors to Olympia were resigned to discomfort, and thought only of

entrants and possible winners. Would Alcibiades' luck hold? How many chariots would be enter? Would the Alcmæonid horses equal the speed of the Thessalian? And what of Thebes, Corinth, Syracuse? Ambitious, all of them, and training horses and charioteers this past year no doubt.

Three new Judges in purple mantles and crowned with bay leaves sat under their canopy, this time at the semicircular end of the course. Behind were the flute-players and the powerful attendants with their staves. Alcibiades sat again in the very centre of the oval's length, his narrowed lids concealing the excited glitter of his eyes. Many heads were bent forward to get a glimpse of his face, but he chatted indifferently with his friends until a sudden hush fell on the assembly. A Herald mounted a platform above the Judges and blew a terrific blast on his trumpet. And then in a sonorous carrying voice he announced the programme, the names of the competitors, and the number of chariots and horses they had entered.

Four chariots would run abreast. They would race three times round the course (divided down the middle by an earthen embankment) and then give place to four others. Twenty races in all would be run and then the final races between the victors. (In old times the chariots had raced ten abreast, and only once; but the many terrible accidents had given rise to the new method, which also prolonged the excitement.)

The Herald called the names.

Diogenes of Syracuse one chariot four horses. Stesambrotus of Corinth two chariots eight horses. Apollodorus of Thebes one chariot four horses. Charidas of Tegea one chariot four horses. Diceas of Mantinea one chariot four horses. Diodorus of Thessaly two chariots eight horses. And so on until the Herald had called the names of all the States and cities competing save one.

He paused a moment as if recovering his wind and went on.

Agathon of Athens one chariot four horses. Callias of Athens two chariots and eight horses.

He paused again, and then fairly bellowed :

Alcibiades son of Cleinias and Strategos of Athens, seven chariots and twenty-eight horses.

Even the Judges started perceptibly. The crowd after a moment of deeper silence, stunned and unbelieving, burst into roars, shouts, cries of incredulous wonder, and a few hissed. Never in the history of Olympia, not even in the old days of Tyrants and Kings, had such a proclamation been made. They had dared to bet he would enter three, but never had the possibility of such a display of wealth and extravagance entered their minds. And Athens after ten years of war, devastation, loss of subject-states, to outshine the richest cities in Hellas ! And not only with her gold plate, but with racing chariots, the most expensive toys known to man ! Never in the proudest days of her Empire had she appeared so Olympian. No wonder she worshipped Alcibiades, who so worthily expressed her magnificence, her ambitions, her pride, and placed her destinies in his hands, young as he was.

The strange conglomeration of sounds deepened into a thundering roar of applause, for despite hatreds and resentments, Sport was still king, and they were tremendously excited. Seven chariots !

Once more every head strained forward and even the Priestess lifted her veil for a second. But Alcibiades was as immobile as any god in its temple.

Another blast and the company subsided. The names (chosen by lot) of Agathon, Apollodorus, Diogenes, and Charidas, were announced, and four chariots dashed through the lower entrance and were pulled up dramatically. It was a splendid sight, the sixteen fine horses, the light painted chariots, the four

proud charioteers, their arms bare, their hair confined with a broad coloured band.

Another blast and they were off, the horses running neck and neck, the charioteers, a rein in either hand, guiding them as easily as if driving a mule-cart on a country road.

They tore down the long course, half-obscured by clouds of dust, and as they approached the circular altar that served as a turning-post, every man was on his feet but silent with apprehension. The chariots made the dangerous turn, and came galloping back to turn again, still neck and neck. But at the third turning there was disaster. One of Agathon's horses shied at the altar, there was a moment of rearing and plunging, the chariot went over, four horses struggled wildly above a dead charioteer.

Agathon burst into tears, but even Pausanias gave no heed. The eyes of all were on the three remaining chariots racing for the goal. Diogenes the Syracusan came out ahead and his name rent the skies.

There was an interval of ten minutes between races, that the spectators might have time to wipe their perspiring brows and engage in passionate discussion.

Stesambrotus of Corinth won the second race, but both he and Diogenes were dismissed from every mind when the next four chariots were trotted in and the name of Alcibiades was called by the Herald. And not only because he was to compete at last, the Alcmæonid horses had been famous for generations and had won many races at Olympia.

Four magnificent steeds as black as Pluto, harnessed to a purple chariot emblazoned with the arms of Alcibiades. Even the charioteer was taller and handsomer than the others, and stood like a statue in his loose white garment, a white fillet above his grave steady eyes. Scarcely a glance lingered on the other chariots and not a thought after the signal to start, for the Alcmæonids had dashed ahead before the first

hundred yards were covered. Their feet seemed winged, they turned every curve in solitary glory, and with less effort than a swallow skimming from tree to tree. They seemed hardly winded when they reached the goal and ran out of the enclosure. The name of Alcibiades shattered the empyrean.

Twenty races, eight disasters, and then the races between the victors. Then the final race between six only. Alcibiades' horses had won three races out of the twenty, one chariot had been smashed, and the Corinthians, Thebans, and Thessalians had given a good account of themselves.

The final race lay between Alcibiades (three chariots), Diogenes, Stesambrotus, and Timon.

By this time the spectators were almost voiceless. Sweating, stamping, pushing, their mantles under their feet, their eyes half-blinded by the dust, some even sick from excitement and strain, they held what breath they had left as the chariots started on their precarious way. In the final race if more than four chariots competed, a rare enough event, there was always disaster at the turnings. Wheels interlocked. Charioteers, ignoring the rules of the game, crowded shamelessly. It was no time for a man to think of aught but himself.

Alcibiades also was on his feet, but his mantle was in place, and he stood with his arms folded, his face expressionless, his lids low. He was filled with an almost uncontrollable excitement, but not for a moment did he lose faith in his star. Nor in his charioteers and horses. He had been angry for a moment when three of his teams came in second, but shrugged his shoulders and accepted the fortune of war. And at least the lives of neither horses nor driver had been lost in the smash-up.

As the chariots flew past him one of his own was already in the lead. It reached the turn and made it safely while the others were still several yards behind.

The second was also his, and made the turn. Then came the Syracusan, the Corinthian, the Argive, the third Athenian, and the suspense was agonizing until all six had flashed round that narrow oval and raced back down the course. Twice again they made the turn and only one chariot went down while the Corinthians cursed aloud. Thrice round the course went the flying chariots, the horses looking as if they would leap from their slender harness, the charioteers as rigid as stone. Howls, groans, and moans rose from the amphitheatre and many arms worked automatically as if pulling on reins.

The Alcmæonids came in first, second, and third. Diogenes won the fourth prize. There were no others.

The vast throng found its voice and gave forth cheers, hoarse, almost terrible. It sounded like a last rally on the battlefield, swelling to triumph. Only the defeated Theôri were silent, and the Corinthians and Thebans hated Athens as never before. The Argives, who had not done badly, and whose love or hate had nothing to do with their allegiance to Athens, pressed forward to congratulate Alcibiades. Diogenes was mortified and deeply disappointed, but, determined not to be a poor sport, elbowed his way through the crowd and said pleasant things to the smiling victor.

"Silence!" roared the Herald. "The moment has come to distribute the prizes. Alcibiades son of Cleinias, the Judges summon you."

Alcibiades, to a mighty clapping of hands, ploughed his way up the course and stood proudly before the bench under the canopy. On a table inlaid with ivory and gold lay the sacred olive branches, the longer twisted into garlands. He bent his head while his brow was bound with a linen band, and was then solemnly crowned as the Herald recited his exalted pedigree, and his brave deeds by sea and land. He was crowned twice again, the Herald repeating the

panegyric, made a graceful speech of acknowledgment and returned to his seat amidst fervid applause.

The Herald shouted the name of Diogenes, and holding his mantle high, he stumbled through the sand and his head was bound as firmly as its moist baldness would permit. Puffing and blowing, his wreath slightly askew, he wallowed back to great laughter and the good-natured clapping of blistered hands.

The winners of the games were called up one by one and received the precious branches; as proud as Alcibiades himself, and happy in the knowledge that their triumph would not end here. They would be fêted and showered with honours when they returned to their cities, the envied of all boys and men. Poets would sing their praises. Their names would be engraved in the Greek Calendar. Victors at Olympia! Hardly less immortal than the gods.

The winners, garlanded and led by Alcibiades and the young Athenian who had won the foot-race, marched to the six double altars on the Hill of Kronos, singing the old Ionic song of victory by Archilochus; that inventor, a hundred years since, of the "restless rhythm of the iambic." Friends pelted them with flowers and costly presents.

XXXI

Saon assumed command that afternoon. He allowed Alcibiades and his friends but an hour's sleep, then turned them out to seek the shade of the Altis.

The ends of the large tent were opened, poles driven in, and canopies with long silken curtains erected. Saon had brought only three house slaves, but those of Callias and Agathon were pressed into service, and they carried over couches and tables belonging to their masters and other expected guests.

Besides the Syracusans and the members of his club, twenty-three including himself, Alcibiades had

invited Agathon and Pausanias, Cleinias and Christobulus, Callias and Autolycus, and his boyhood friend Archeptolemus. Young Pericles had been encouraged to dine with relatives from Miletus. Callias had given his banquet on the preceding night, and as Alcibiades declined to have any sophists at his table, monopolizing the conversation with learned homilies, he had found places for them in more serious company.

The charioteers were having a banquet of their own. Alcibiades, who had gone at once to their tent to congratulate the winners, and give even the defeated a handsome present, had told them that Saon would provide them with food and wine to entertain as many of their friends as they cared to ask.

Nobody was ever in a better humour than Alcibiades that evening. True, he would have liked to win every race, but even he had expected no such good fortune as that, and it was enough that he was victor, that he had elevated Athens once more above all other states, and bagged not one olive branch but three. His name was on every tongue, and no triumph on the Bema, no splendid feat in battle, not even his position as head of the State at thirty, had ever raised him to such a height in the estimation of men as his magnificence and his victories at Olympia. He had dispatched a messenger to Tiy, that she might be the first to hear the great news.

"Why didn't you bring Setamon?" he asked his cousin, as they awaited the guests.

Axiochus shrugged. "What would you? I invited the boy, but that beautiful tyrant not only refused to let him come but locked him up, lest he should run away and follow me. By the way, I heard a curious story the other day in Athens—that you took Setamon to the house of Nemea. Odd, he never spoke of it to me."

"Do me the favour to say nothing about it," said Alcibiades hurriedly. "I will explain later—here they come."

Wearing a white mantle and one of his olive crowns, he stood smiling in the door of his tent as the guests approached. They arrived almost simultaneously, for at sundown every man had his appetite, and only Socrates was ever known to be late to a banquet ; not even that "Spartan" unless he had fallen into a reverie on his way to the house.

Sixteen couches were ranged along the walls, but one stood alone at the head of the tent. To this the host led the Syracusan with much ceremony.

"We are thirty-three, O Diogenes," he said, "and one must recline alone. Who should that be if not our most honoured and distinguished guest ? I shall share this couch at the left with Critias son of Callæschrus, and a member of the illustrious house of Solon. Callias son of Hipponicus will sit on your right with Aristophanes son of Phillipus, the greatest of our comic poets as you well know."

Diogenes appreciated the compliment of the single couch so conspicuously placed, and of being flanked by five of the richest men in Athens ; Agathon, another man of wealth and fashion, occupied the second couch on the left, with Pausanias. Moreover, he esteemed talent as highly as any man and smiled graciously upon Aristophanes.

Certain of Alcibiades' other friends, who had been whispering with Axiochus apart, crowded as close to the head of the tent as the couches permitted, but Cleinias chose one at the far end. His family pride was gratified by this latest of his brother's eagle flights, but he felt nevertheless a sensation of dismay. There was something almost terrifying in such continuous and shattering triumphs over all other men. Where would he end, or what would be *his* end ?

He had even had the audacity to carry off the gold plate for his banquet, and although the lesser Theôri had protested excitedly, for such a thing had never been heard of as the use of the State's treasure by a

citizen, they were so proud of him, and his manner was so kingly, they were almost persuaded he was demanding no more than his right, and let him have it.

A chill had fallen with evening, but nothing could discourage the Olympian pests. Incense rose heavily and slaves never ceased from wielding the long brushes. The tent was lighted by a row of hanging lamps and they attracted gnats as well as mosquitoes.

"I hope you are as hungry as I am, O Diogenes," said Alcibiades politely, "and will enjoy your dinner."

"I could eat an ox," said the Syracusan fervently. "And I have been on short rations these last three days. My cook made ridiculous excuses, and was no doubt drunk, or too lazy to unpack my choicest delicacies. I shall dismiss him when I return to Syracuse. Of course you brought your cook with you, Alcibiades?"

"I did, but he is not worthy to cook for Diogenes. The Elean cooks are the best in Hellas, and I have engaged one for the night—I mean in Hellas proper, of course," he added as the great man frowned. "No cooks equal those of Syracuse."

Diogenes' brow relaxed. "The Eleans do very well," he said condescendingly. "And I am rejoiced that your ample fare will be worthily treated. I suppose you will serve fresh meat, as you hardly could bring the fish to which Athenians give preference."

"Alas, no. I would I could place before you our lobsters and oysters, but I promise that you shall not be forced to eat coarse meat in this weather. Fowl may be brought alive—I hope you will like the duckling."

The tables had been brought in, and on each was a delicate little fowl garnished with lettuce and parsley, and served with bread. There was a laughing cheer at sight of the gold plate.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Syracusan, his eyes moist.

"I too brought ducklings, but not one has graced my own table," And he took the tit-bit in both hands and devoured it with relish.

Murmurs of gratification ran round the room as the others nibbled the birds daintily, wiped their hands on the bread, and threw it to the floor.

"I knew that you had quail in Athens, but I thought you sent to Thebes for your ducks—when on good terms with that city," said Diogenes as the slaves carried away the empty plates.

"We have a mysterious process by which we convert quail into ducks," said Aristophanes solemnly. "It is a process known only to our magicians. They practice in secret and command a high price."

"Ah?" The rich man raised himself on his elbow. "Do you still practise magic in Athens? Send me one of those men. I will pay him his price."

"I will make you a present of one," said Alcibiades magnificently. "I have two slaves who have learned the art. One shall go by the next trading-ship to Syracuse."

"I thank you, Alcibiades. Your generosity is well known. What is this?"

"Goose-livers stewed with a rare species of mushroom," said the host blandly. "I hope they meet your favour."

"Goose-livers? Rare species of mushroom? I did not know that Athens——" But appetite conquered curiosity, and the delicacy followed the duck.

"Alcibiades!" cried Archeptolemus, who had arrived later than the others. "Where in Zeus' name——"

"Did I get my cook? Ask Saon. He is the real magician. Does the dish please you, O Diogenes?"

"Never tasted anything better," wiping his beard with the back of his hand. "I would have sworn that only my own farms could produce such mushrooms and goose-livers. Where did you get them?"

Callias drew a deep sigh. "Alcibiades is a genius. A true child of the gods. All things are possible to him. He utters a wish—waves a wand—Lo! Whatever he has asked for flies in at the window."

Diogenes drew an even deeper sigh. "And he is crowned thrice at Olympia! Truly is he the favoured of the gods."

The next course was vegetables: peas, lentils, garlic, lettuce, and the edible bulb of the iris, all cooked together in a savoury mess, and eaten by the Syracusan without comment. This was true Athenian fare and better than he had expected.

But when his eyes rested on the following dish he looked extremely thoughtful.

"Peacocks' tongues!" he exclaimed. "Now where—but peacocks' tongues have never been seen out of Syracuse and Sybaris."

"You see them to-night, O Diogenes," said Alcibiades gently. "And may they leap to your palate."

"But where—where——" And he turned a hard and glittering eye on his host.

"The magician again!" cried Aristophanes. "He does it for us in Alcibiades' house regularly. Plain collops are brought in, that worthy man makes a pass—presto! Collops are peacocks' tongues, and our eyes water and our own tongues hang out."

The tongue of Diogenes savoured the birds'. "Hm. Hm. There is a subtle condiment that preserves it. . . . I recognize the flavour. . . . the recipe is known only to a few Syracusan families." And once more his eyes rolled toward Alcibiades, who was regarding him with an expression of innocent delight.

"How gratified I am!" The host's eyes sparkled. "I hoped you would recognize it. Remember that I too have been in Syracuse."

"And bought one of our secrets? Or——" And once more he looked thoughtful. Then his glance swept the room, and every eye was hastily averted,

mouths hard-pressed. Only the two members of his suite were staring.

"Hm," muttered Diogenes. "Hm."

Once more the tables were cleared, this time to be set with fruit and cakes.

"Ah!" he exclaimed a moment later. "Naxian almonds!"

"We have a lively trade with Naxos," Alcibiades hastened to explain. "None of her products is more popular with us than almonds. I hope this cook has made them into cakes that please your experienced palate."

"They taste uncommonly like those of my own cook. But—I recognize the truth of what you say. Naxos is closer to Athens than to Syracuse."

He gorged himself on the cakes. "Your good Chian wine will be grateful," he remarked. "Your dinner has been an exquisite one, and I hope soon to visit Athens, and watch the feats of your magician. But such fare, both abundant and delicious, creates a thirst."

"For what else do we eat?" cried Aristophanes. "We could sustain life on acorns and wash them down with water, were that all. We eat food, spiced with salt, herbs, and marjoram, and then honey-sweets, to tease the palate into a keen desire for wine. Wine rich and rare! The wine! The wine, Alcibiades! Bid the slaves hasten!"

The reliable Saon had found flute girls in the town, and they came dancing down the space between the couches, luscious strains filling the tent. A garland was placed on every head, and the tables, which had been taken out and washed, were brought in again with the goblets. As Alcibiades poured the libation the flute girls changed their tune and all sang the hymn of thanksgiving to the gods. Then Alcibiades dipped his goblet again and rose to his feet.

"To you, O Diogenes," he cried. "Honoured guest.

Winner of games and races these many years past. Famous for horses, food, and wine. To the great host of Syracuse, whose house is famous throughout Hellas, whose hospitality is ever extended to Athenians. To you, in these precious goblets of Athens, which I demanded solely in your honour, we drink this rare Thasian wine——"

"Thasian wine?" Diogenes rose on his elbow, his nostrils twitching.

"Thasian wine, the richest and rarest. By my orders this first krater is undiluted that you may taste its full flavour. Permit me to celebrate it in the classic words of one of our great poets—I have forgotten his name at the moment."

And he lifted his powerful sweet tenor voice and rollicked out the words of the song.

For all the ills that men endure
Thasian is the certain cure;
For any head or stomach ache,
Thasian wine I always take.
And think it as I go home reeling
A present from the god of healing.

"Chorus!"

The company—or most of it—half-sang, half-chanted the refrain.

And think it a-a-a-s I go home re-e-e-e-ling
A present f-r-o-m the god of he-e-e-al-ing.

Diogenes, who had drained his cup, was also on his feet.

"By Zeus and Poseidon!" he shouted, his face purple. "This is no wine but mine own! I'd recognize it in a thousand! You have raided my larder, you young whelp of Pluto! Everything I have eaten here to-night, save only those vegetables, I brought with me from Syracuse. Deny it if you dare."

"Diogenes! Diogenes!" Alcibiades spoke with the dignity of a great gentleman rebuking an angry upstart. "Of what are you accusing me?—your

host! Guard your tongue, I pray you. The Thasian wine of my house is as famous as the Alcmæonid horses."

"It is my wine, I tell you! My wine! My peacocks' tongues! My goose-livers and mushrooms! My ducklings! Your slaves have raided my larder or bribed my cook. He'll be whipped out of Olympia to-morrow! I'll go to Athens and bring this outrage before the courts——"

Callias put his hand on the angry man's shoulder and pushed him back to the couch. He knew him well, for he had been often in Syracuse. "This is not seemly," he whispered. "Alcibiades is your host. And you have no proof——"

"No proof, when I have had nothing to eat for three days!"

"Remember this is Olympia and all quarrelling is prohibited. Be a good sport—as you were in the Hippodrome——"

"I'll not be made a fool of by that young Bacchus. His tongue lied just now but his eyes laughed. I have heard of his pranks, his escapades that have set all Hellas talking. But never did I think that I—I—Diogenes of Syracuse, whose riches are known even in Susa——" He had begun on a high note, but breath failed him and his words died away in a mutter. Truth to tell, the wine had begun to fill him with a pleasant glow and he found it difficult to keep his wrath at proper pitch. He continued to glare, however, at Alcibiades, who was smiling amiably and draining another goblet. Did his eyes deceive him? Did one of those broad lids drop in a wink? The others, all but the two Syracusans, who were held down forcibly, were rocking with mirth. The girls continued to play and dance.

Suddenly the great man burst into a roar of laughter, once more on his feet.

"I apologize, Alcibiades," he cried. "Your auda-

city and impudence are god-like, and by Zeus, I admire them. Here's to your health—in my own Thasian wine!" And he dipped his goblet into the hastily passed krater.

The young men shouted their appreciation; in a trice he was the most popular man in Olympia. He and Alcibiades embraced solemnly and swore eternal friendship. Once more Alcibiades had made the wrong thing right, and Androcles ground his teeth, but drank to the health of both.

And then the young men, led by Alcibiades, Critias, and Aristophanes, set out to amuse this sporting old gentleman. They told their wittiest and naughtiest stories. They sang their most ribald songs. They composed odes in his honour. Aristophanes recited from *The Clouds*, a failure when produced, but rewritten for a future Dionysia. The flute girls sat on his lap and poured wine down his throat.

At long past midnight he reeled home between Alcibiades and Callias, followed by the entire company singing the new drinking-song bewitched from the brain of Critias by that rare Thasian wine. They put him to bed and he fell asleep while begging them all to return with him to Syracuse.

Nevertheless, he sent for his cook as soon as he awakened next morning; and was nowise surprised to learn that he had offered his services to a rich Corinthian and fled in the night.

XXXII

For two days and nights after his return Alcibiades was unable to go to the house of Tiy. He was the Olympian hero and the people demanded that he should show himself every moment in public. All Piræus met him at the wharf, and as he mounted the chariot awaiting him—a chariot drawn by four milk-white dancing horses—sang the ode Euripides had composed

in his honour. As he stood beside the charioteer the chief magistrate of the port draped him in a purple mantle, a gift from the city. Followed by cheering thousands he drove up between the Long Walls to the Melitian Gate, where he mounted his own horse ; the narrow streets of Athens would not accommodate four prancing steeds abreast.

Mount Lycabettus, the other hills low and high, the city walls, the streets, were a dense mass of spectators shouting his name. Women showered flowers and confetti from above. Aspasia, watching his triumphal progress from the roof of her house, recalled that great day of her youth when Pericles returned from Samos. There had been nothing in Athens to compare with it until to-day.

Not even Cleon and Demosthenes returning from Sphakteria, nor Nicias with the Treaty of Peace from Sparta had received such an ovation. Alcibiades was Alcibiades and Olympia was Olympia. Winners of the olive branch had been greeted with acclaim many times, but none had captivated the public so completely.

He was obliged to ride from dawn till dark through the streets of the city, out into the country, where the roads were lined with cheering farmers, charcoal-burners, apiarists, shepherds, goat-herds ; to make speeches, stop and talk to this man and that, until his brain was wearied by the fulsome congratulations. Nevertheless, his heart beat high. He had reached a heaven-kissing pinnacle. Not even Themistocles himself had been such a popular hero, for he lacked the blinding fascination and supreme physical beauty of this darling of the gods. They seemed to know by intuition that he never would be defeated on sea or land, and believed like himself that he would be as great in peace as in war.

He found no time to carry his olive crowns to the temple of Athenè until noon on the day of his arrival.

An hour before this sacred rite he dived into his house, leaving a shouting crowd at his door, to take a bath and change his tunic. Fresh once more and his helmet nicely adjusted he remembered his son and opened the door leading to the inner court.

Only little Alcibiades was there, trundling a hoop. He uttered his usual shriek of delight, and his father kissed and tossed him, and then carried him into the thalamos to show him one of the wreaths.

"You, too, will win the olive branch years hence at Olympia," he said proudly, and although he was no expert in baby-talk he managed to convey to the eagerly listening boy some idea of the scene in the Hippodrome.

A shadow fell across the doorway and he looked up to see Hippareté standing just beyond the threshold, very pretty in her morning freshness, and smiling demurely.

"Greetings, Alcibiades," she said. "And congratulations. Once more you have cast all other men into the shade."

"Thanks, dear Hippareté. Come in, come in," he added hospitably.

"No, thank you. The thalamos is not for me. Come out into the court if you wish to talk to me—and I should like to see one of the olive branches. Callias won a little one when he was a boy, and my father a larger one, that he too laid on the altar of Athenè in the old temple. It is quite inspiring to belong to families so blessed by the gods."

She turned and Alcibiades followed her, for he knew quite well why she would not enter the thalamos. She handled the olive branch reverently. "It is very beautiful," she sighed. "Very sacred and wonderful. From the tree of Hercules and the Altis of Zeus! Would that I too had been born a man."

"Ah, no," said Alcibiades lightly, "for then we should not have this most beautiful of boys." He

picked up the child again and caressed him. "And what have you been doing with yourself?" he inquired absently.

"I have amused myself well, for it was the season of the Parasol Festival, you remember—although probably not. I saw your Egyptian there."

"My Egyptian!"

"Yes," said Hippareté placidly. "She is your mistress, is she not?"

"She is not!" He had rarely felt more angry. "Who has been traducing her?"

"Androcles told Crytella his wife that you were constantly at her house."

"I'll break his head. And I've not been there as often as himself. Do you women do nothing but gossip?"

"Little else. What would you? But many things have I seen with my own eyes. There is a door leading from this court to the andron, and I am not above peeking. Few of us are; we amuse ourselves as best we may. And while you were away I went often into the other part of the house, for I enjoy its beauty. One day I found Nemea in the pastas, very much at home reading the last play of Euripides."

"How dared she!" He set the child down and stared at his wife in dismay. "No hetæra comes to my house unless invited. And how did you know she was Nemea? You did not speak to her, I hope?"

"I had quite a conversation with her." Hippareté smiled complacently. "I had never even seen a hetæra before and I was much interested. I thought her very beautiful and charming, and she seemed quite fascinated at the novelty of talking to a respectable woman, although of course she despised me. I have invited her to come one day to the inner court and meet my friends—who are wild at the prospect. They believe she can teach them many secrets. Of course most women wish to keep their husbands."

Alcibiades was speechless. But as she stood there regarding him with her sedate little smile, he found his voice.

"If you dare," he said between his teeth. "If you dare!"

"Well, if you object she can slip into one of the other houses, by the back door."

"You are a lot of little hussies!" Her husband almost spat in his disgust. "A sound whipping is what you all need. I overheard a number of those friends of yours talking one day, and Nemea could teach you to express yourselves more decently."

"We have not had the benefit of her education. Aphrodite is kinder to her votaries than Artemis. Our vocabularies are limited. But if you are not in a hurry there is something I should like to say to you."

"I am in a great hurry. But say it. As your vocabulary is limited no doubt it will not take more than a minute. What is it? A new chiton?"

"It is this: I wish to divorce you."

"Divorce! What!" For the first time in his life he was thoroughly taken aback. Then his eyes flashed blue lightning.

"Yes, Alcibiades. I have stood your neglect and this house full of harlots as long as should be expected of any woman. I shall not go to the house of Callias, for it is no better and perhaps worse. Would that I had an elder sister! But I should live contentedly in the little house of Hermegones, whom my father treated so unjustly. He was the kindest of men, but he made that will——"

"Enough!" thundered Alcibiades. "Understand once for all that I shall never permit you to divorce me——"

"You mean you will not because you would be forced to return those ten talents of my marriage and those ten bestowed by Callias when our son was born!" Hippareté too lost her temper.

"Reason enough. And it has not occurred to you, I suppose, that if you left my house you would leave your child behind?"

"Oh——" faltered Hippareté. "I know that is the law—but you have so little time for children—you would not miss him—I thought——"

"Every Athenian loves his children whether he loves the mother or not. Alcibiades does not leave this house—nor you either. That is my last word. I have lingered here too long already."

And he returned to his cheering admirers, his spirits somewhat dashed.

XXXIII

On the third morning, shortly after dawn, Alcibiades let himself out by the servants' entrance of the inner court and made his way stealthily to the hill near the Pnyx; he knew that even at this early hour there would be a crowd before his house.

The slave was not at the door and he knocked repeatedly before it was opened. He began to feel embarrassed and wondered if the Egyptians were later risers than the Greeks.

But it opened at length. The Nubian was always hideous, but he seemed doubly so this morning. Alcibiades' indifferent glance, however, took no note of the cause.

The man bowed low and pointed to the roof. As he was crossing the aula to the narrow stair at the back Setamon emerged from his room. Alcibiades gave a startled exclamation. The boy had shaved his eyebrows. And so had the Nubian!

"Why—what——" he stammered, forgetting his manners. But the effect was grotesque.

"Greetings, O Alcibiades. My eyebrows? One of those cats died and she made us all shave—all but herself and the girls who play for her guests. She'd

not have got out of it if she'd been in Egypt, but of course it makes no difference how *I* look." And his eyebrowless scowl had a singular ferocity.

"Well, they will soon grow again," said Alcibiades soothingly. "I believe Theodoté complains that hers grow too fast. Have you seen Axiochus? He was sorry not to take you to Olympia. You would have been welcome in my tent."

"I was locked in." The boy struggled with tears. "And I would have given more than my eyebrows to go! Oh—a great hero like you cannot understand what it means to be nothing but a man! If she would only let me go back to Egypt! I would have more liberty there without her than I shall ever have here."

Alcibiades' sympathies were quick if somewhat fleeting; he felt sorry for the boy. And his swift calculating mind, that had the rare faculty of working simultaneously with his emotions, approved of the absence of Setamon from Athens. He must be given no hold over Tiy.

"I will speak to her," he said reassuringly. "I think I can persuade her to let you return. Now put up your hair under your cap and go and seek Axiochus in his house. He will be glad to share his bread and wine with you, and tell you all about Olympia."

He ran up the stair, but as his head and shoulders rose above the roof he paused abruptly, lost in admiration.

Tiy, her dusky mass of hair unbound, her head thrown back, was standing with arms upraised and palms upright, facing the rising sun in an attitude of adoration. Her thin white garment clung to the long lines of her noble form, her profile was cut hard against the dark north. As the sun rose higher it flooded her with a rosy glow. She was marble for the moment, a heroic statue, this worshipper of the sun-god, whose pedestal should be a high mountain for all men to gaze at from afar.

He wondered he felt no passion for this woman, the

handsomest he had ever seen; but he did not. He was filled with the lust of conquest only. Nevertheless, his passionate love of beauty was stirred to its depths.

He stepped silently to the roof, but she heard him and dropped her arms.

"I was worshipping Ra," she said simply. "It is my morning habit."

She smiled as she came forward and offered him her hand. Hand-shaking was not a Greek custom, but he took hers and shook it warmly.

"You have understood," he said. "I could not come here before. I was obliged to slip out the back way this morning."

"I did not expect you, and thank you for your message from Olympia. Let us sit down."

She led the way to a marble bench under a canopy. "I have been watching your magnificence from this roof," she said, her long flexible mouth curling. "And my ears have been shattered. I feared at one time they would tear you to pieces."

"Oh, the Athenians are really gentle. I hope you let poor Setamon out. He looked very unhappy when I met him just now downstairs."

"Yes, I let him go forth. I knew that no one would pay any attention to him, that he couldn't get into mischief if he tried."

"Why don't you send him back to Egypt where he will feel less out of place? And Athens is no city for a handsome boy unless he is guarded every moment. It is useless for you to lock him in, for one day he will discover he can easily make a hole in the wall and crawl out. That is the way burglars enter. They waste no time on locks."

"Ah!" She looked alarmed. "I had never heard of that. I beg you will put no such idea into his head."

"If I do not some one else will. And boys are the most resourceful creatures on earth."

"Not in Egypt. No more than your women. But I shall consider the matter. I have given up the idea of marrying him in Athens. I knew little of your laws before I came here. None of the Eupatridæ would consider an illegal marriage with a foreigner, no matter how wealthy. And he could ally himself with no other."

"Certainly not. He must marry a girl of his own rank. Some one told Axiochus that I had taken him to the house of Nemea, and I was obliged to confide in my cousin lest he should speak to the boy. I hope this does not anger you."

Tiy laughed. "I care not if all Athens knows that I went to the house of Nemea. I only hope other happenings of that night will not be reported to Axiochus, or another. And now tell me of Olympia. The messengers brought the great news and cried it through the city, but I would have the whole story from you."

"Willingly, but give me bread and wine first, I beg of you! I left the house before even Saon was up."

"I should have asked you!" She never sprang to her feet; her movements were always slow and majestic; but she rose promptly nevertheless and her tones were warm with hospitality.

They went down to the court, and the slave brought him the frugal Athenian breakfast and his mistress a plate of fruit.

He gave her a graphic description of the ceremonies in the Altis, the games in the Stadium, the excitement in the Hippodrome. It never would have occurred to him to disguise his intense pride in his victories nor to make more than passing mention of any one else. It was the story of Olympia and Alcibiades was its hero. He was too subtle and accomplished for vulgar boasting, but when a man has won all the honours his world can bestow, why in Zeus' name should he be the one to ignore them while others sing his praises?

Nevertheless, he conveyed to Tiy that he was more self-revealing to her than he would be to another.

He watched her closely as he talked, but although her eyes flashed, and she even clapped her hands as if startled into applause by his description of the chariot-race, there was no melting of that proud determined face. She laughed heartily and rather heartlessly at the joke he had played on the rich Syracusan.

"And do you believe he has forgiven you?" she asked.

"He had, at all events. How he feels now only the gods know—and care as little as I. But when a man has a sense of humour he rarely harbours a grievance."

"And the plate! To me that is the most characteristic of your Olympian feats, for I doubt if even your Tyrant Pisistratus would have had the audacity to demand it."

His eyes twinkled. He looked like a mischievous boy. "I haven't returned it, either. I sent it out of Olympia by a devious route while the Theôri were wringing their hands and calling down the vengeance of the gods. They have sent every hour to my house and driven poor Saon nearly frantic. It is concealed under my couch."

"You do not mean to return it?" she cried aghast. "You will appropriate the treasure of Athens?"

"I intend to give a great banquet three nights hence; not to my friends but to the archons and certain members of the Council. I wish the amusement of watching their faces when the tables are brought in, superb with the gold plate of Athens. They will gasp and turn red, pale, and green, but they will not know what to say. Critias will be there to share my amusement. Then, when I have tormented those poor old Theôri sufficiently I'll send it back with my warmest thanks."

"But why don't they send the police?" she demanded.

"They would not dare," he said insolently. "I am Alcibiades. Many a man, and long before I was Strategos, would have liked to carry his grievance to the courts, but dared not."

"Democratic Athens! You should be giving your attention to affairs of state instead of occupying it with pranks," she added impatiently. "But no wonder you are spoiled. I hear that Euripides wrote the ode of victory that was chanted by choral bands at the great public dinner on the night of your return, and that he—who shuns society—attended the banquet given you by Callias last evening."

"Yes, and I wish he had stayed at home. He and Aristophanes hate each other—each aspiring to be the luminary at which intellectual young men light their torches—and when the two were not quarrelling, he sat like the chief mourner at a funeral."

"But I should like to hear that ode," she said eagerly. "I have read all his plays and find him more interesting and modern than your other tragic poets, although I resent his attitude to women."

"It is not very good and no doubt he wrote it unwillingly, for he loves me as much as he does Aristophanes. But Callias has given him many rare books for his library, so he would refuse him nothing. Here it is:

> "Son of Cleinias, thee I sing.
> In truth it is a noble thing,
> First, second, and third place
> To win in chariot race.
> To hear the Herald thrice thy name proclaim,
> And thrice to bear away the olive crown of fame.

"Not far removed from doggerel, although, having been properly brought up by my pædagogus, I thanked him as graciously as if I had been celebrated in one of Pindar's mighty odes."

The talk drifted off into politics. She told him something of Egypt's relations with Persia, and surprised him by her rapid mastery of Athenian affairs. Her summing-up of each of the men who visited her was astonishingly accurate. "Trust Critias," she said, "as long as his interests run parallel with yours. He is not treacherous, nor has he any desire for your downfall—I suspect Androcles there—and he admires you sincerely and is proud of your confidence. But he is a hard cruel man and entirely selfish. I doubt if he would make the least sacrifice for you—unless it would benefit himself; he is far-sighted, I fancy."

"I know Critias like a book. He is all you say, and it may be that he has an eye to the future when Athens may have turned against me and he may take my place. But as you say he is not treacherous, and at present I have no more ardent supporter. Nor a more useful one. There is no trick he doesn't know, and no movement of my enemies. But friendship! Is not all friendship founded on self-interest?"

"I wonder," she said. "I wonder!"

He was watching her again. "Self-interest is a comprehensive term. Even unselfishness may be selfish. Young Pericles would sacrifice his all for me —very un-Greek that!—but there would be his pleasure. The same may be said of a woman."

"You know less of women than you think," she said dryly. "And friendship is a mental passion and has nothing to do with sex. Of that passion Critias is incapable, but he is the best of friends to himself."

"Enough of Critias! I would talk of you. I am glad to hear you intimate that you are capable of a mental passion at least."

Her head was slightly turned. She slid her long eyes round at him in a fashion she had and gave him an appraising glance. "I intimated nothing," she said. "And you have been talking to me as one man to another."

"I have not, indeed! I have talked to Tiy and none other. Nor do I longer think of you as a man in woman's dress. No more than I regard you as an ordinary woman. You are Tiy, as I am Alcibiades."

"Ah," she asked eagerly, "then you will really confide in me as you promised?"

"I want nothing more. I spoke no idle words on the Acropolis. But it must be to-morrow. The morning is far spent, and I have a meeting with the Board of Strategoi."

He had risen, and stood looking at her reflectively. He had never enjoyed more a long talk with any man, and it was a unique experience to talk as if to a man of his own calibre while looking at a beautiful woman. And she was as worthy of his friendship as the most accomplished of Athenians. A woman experienced in statecraft and as ruthless as himself. A friend who would never betray him, and be proud of his confidence.

He experienced a sudden and utterly novel sense of shame that he had contemplated adding such a woman to his list of conquests—and to humiliate her! He dismissed that purpose angrily, although quite aware the temptation might return later; he knew his vanity. . . .

"What are you thinking of?" she demanded curiously. "You seemed far away."

"I was thinking that I desire your friendship and should prize it above all things."

His eyes were entirely honest for once and her own gave a quick response.

"I am your friend, Alcibiades," she said quietly. "And I have acquired some influence over these men who come to my house. I may be able to prove my friendship in many ways. Selfishly, perhaps, but what of that? And all I ask in return is sincerity. You have moods in which you are capable of it, and in them I like you best. Go now, and come when you will."

XXXIV

THE heat became unbearable in Athens and Tiy rented a villa at Phaleron. She had not yet made up her mind to send Setamon back to Thebes, and when Axiochus invited him to spend a month at his country house she let him go with no misgivings. She knew that this kind friend of her brother devoted the hot months to his family, and so far he had kept that restless boy out of mischief.

Hippareté went to the country two days after her husband's return from Olympia, and the estate of Alcibiades adjoined that of his cousin.

Alcibiades remained in Athens. He was as indifferent to heat as to cold. Notwithstanding his love of luxury he was as hardy as any goat-herd on the mountains.

He would have been inexpressibly bored in the country, even had he no reason for remaining in Athens, and he had more than one. The Erectheum on the northern side of the Acropolis, designed to be an Ionic temple of incomparable loveliness, had been begun under Pericles but had proceeded little beyond its foundations when the outbreak of the war forbade further expenditures on art. At last it was possible to finish it. The Lyceum must also be rebuilt. Beyond the walls, it had been destroyed by the enemy, and those shady groves, those marble porticoes, must be restored to the men whose favourite afternoon resort it had been. His own love of beauty would be gratified, and his popularity with the people kept alive by an increase of affluence among the workmen. They had had a hard and bitter time during the war and now looked to him to improve their condition. As Administrator of Public Works the initiative lay in his hands. There was grumbling by the Council, but his eloquence prevailed.

He had also conceived an inter-Peloponnesian policy

which would further isolate Sparta, and was in correspondence with friends in various states. This was a well-kept secret, however. To break the Treaty openly would create unrest in Athens. It was engraved on a pillar of stone in Athens as in Sparta, and as long as that pillar stood there for all men to see, the pleasant feeling of security would remain undisturbed.

But he sent private envoys to the Argives and as far north as Achæa. In the spring he would make a tour of the Peloponnesus, but that secret too he confided to no one but Tiy.

Athens was quiet politically. Even the clubs suspended their meetings. Many of the members were at the seaside or on some one of the islands ; with Alcibiades securely entrenched there was little that friends or enemies could accomplish. But there was work to be attended to nevertheless. He had an office in his house and interviewed architects, magistrates, captains of trading-ships, grain-merchants who wanted money for their trading ventures and were willing to pay as high as thirty-three per cent. on loans from rich men, agents from the colonies, and the officials of Piræus.

These men wondered at his facility and thoroughness, but Alcibiades prided himself upon being able to do anything he chose and he adapted himself as readily to business as to politics.

He showed himself constantly in the streets, and encouraged the workmen on the Acropolis and out at the site of the old Lyceum. He dined frequently in the Piræus with Callias, and with Tiy in her villa at Phaleron.

Meanwhile in the deme of Skambonidæ, where his country-house had been rebuilt, strange things were happening.

The women enjoyed in the country all the liberty they were denied in Athens. The estates were small,

and they visited one another, had picnics in the woods, and wore sun-hats instead of veils.

One day Hippareté was sauntering through the pine wood that joined the estates of her husband and his cousin, taking a quiet pleasure in the golden-green gloom of the beautiful old trees that may have been there when Theseus sailed for Crete to fight the Minotaur. The Peloponnesians had left them standing when they destroyed the estates and farms, the olive orchards and vineyards. The splendid old trees would have offered a hardy resistance, and they gave a welcome shade in the heat of summer.

Hippareté felt both sad and happy. She was always happy in the country, with its freedom and the serene beauty of its days, but how could a girl of twenty be other than sad when she had held her husband's affection but a month, and known nothing but neglect and mortification for four long years? Other men might be indifferent to the society of their wives, but they did not neglect them shamefully and relegate them permanently to the inner quarters, nor proclaim their infidelities from the house-tops. And many wives she knew were quite happy, although it might amuse them to abuse their husbands. Some even found companionship with these men whom they had never seen until the day of betrothal. Of course Athenian men had a perfect passion for the Agora, the Gymnasium, and Stadium, where they talked for hours on end, or sat at the feet of sophists and philosophers when not absorbed in the games. But many of them had something left for their wives and children, and were glad to come home when night fell.

What would she not give for even that much of a husband! The pleasant hour in the andron. The quiet companioned evening in aula or pastas. The intimacies of the thalamos.

Hippareté knew she had been cheated, and bitterly resented it. She came of a great house, she was young,

she was not a fool, and she was as pretty as her more fortunate friends. Her life should have been calm and happy—she asked no more. And her fate was notorious in Athens.

She had long ceased to love Alcibiades; she hated him, and would have taken vengeance could she have found the means. It was a poor satisfaction to pierce that glittering armour and administer little pricks to his self-complacency. She had half-hoped he would release her, but that hope had vanished.

Only Hermogenes sympathized with her, amiable, lazy, kind, Hermogenes. She had sent for Callias and begged him to intercede for her—and he had read her a lecture on the duty of wives!

She was tied. Helpless. And she was only twenty. Forty, fifty years perhaps in that inner court. She loved little Alcibiades, but a child is not all at twenty. Life was quick within her and she wanted a husband and lover.

She sat down by the side of a brook and threw off her hat and gazed at her charming face in the still water. The reflection was clearer than her mirror's, although the bronze was silvered and did not turn her into a brunette. So absorbed was she that it was some time before she became uneasily aware she was not alone. She looked up and saw a young man standing on the opposite bank and staring at her with an expression of passionate admiration.

Her first impulse, being a thoroughbred Athenian, was to retire haughtily. But immediately she thought better of it. It would be a subtle revenge on her husband to talk to a strange man. Little enough, but better than nothing.

Moreover, she liked the appearance of this young man. He was very tall and he had singular long eyes and handsome features. He too looked unhappy, and her empty heart sent a kindly message through her glance.

"Who are you?" she asked, although she guessed. "And what have you to do in this wood?"

"I am staying in the house of Axiochus, and did not know that I had wandered too far, although he warned me. My name is Setamon——" He hesitated a moment and then added defiantly, "Son of Antor of Thebes in Egypt."

"Ah! You came with the Egyptian woman?"

"She is my sister. Yes, I came with her. She has promised I shall return, but so far she has not kept her word—and now—how glad I am that she did not!"

Hippareté blushed, and her heart beat more quickly. Only one man had ever looked at her like that—and how soon he had ceased to look at all!

"You must not say such things," she said primly, "but you may come over and talk to me if you like."

He sprang across the narrow stream and seated himself on a stone, his eyes still gazily hungrily at her fresh young beauty.

"Tell me your name," he said eagerly.

"Hippareté daughter of Hipponicus, who fell at Delium—and wife of Alcibiades son of Cleinias."

"Wife—you—you—I thought you were a young girl!"

She laughed at his look of dismay. "Are you in Athens to find a wife?" she asked teasingly.

"I wanted nothing less until I saw you. But I am the unluckiest mortal in all the world! Nothing I have ever wanted have I got."

"But your sister is very wealthy—so must you be also."

"I! She keeps her chests locked and buys even my clothes. Egypt is not Hellas. Have you not heard how it is with us?"

"Yes, I know the women are in power—would that I had been born in Egypt! We have talked much of that strange country since your sister arrived. But I had not realized—does it make you unhappy?"

"Does it? Do not men tyrannize over the women of Athens? Well, we men of Egypt are in no better condition." He made an angry gesture and jerked off his closely fitting cap, a cap that clasped his head like a casque, leaving only his ears exposed. His abundant hair fell over his shoulders.

"Oh!" cried Hippareté. "Oh! Oh!" And she went off into a gale of laughter.

"What do you laugh at?" he asked angrily, and half-rose.

"But you should cut your hair! Men wear their hair short—not like a girl."

"She won't let me. But I'll cut it to-night! I promise you that, if you won't laugh at me again. Let her do what she will." He thanked his gods that his eyebrows had grown.

"Well, please put it out of sight now. I like you much better the other way."

He concealed his hair hastily.

"Now tell me about your country," she said smiling, "and what it is that makes you sad."

And under the encouragement of those eyes, so soft, so deep, so kindly, he poured out his woes, and the eyes kindled and flashed.

"How abominable!" she exclaimed. "How—how—unnatural! What a tyrant this Tiy must be!"

"Tyrant! If I were not so big she'd beat me, but as far as that she dares not venture."

"But is she never kind to you? All the men here think well of her."

"Oh, she can be 'kind' enough. If I were submissive, she'd never say a harsh word, no doubt. And why shouldn't these men—your husband included—think well of her? She is handsome and she entertains them and let's them talk. They see only her best side, for she has only me to put her in a bad humour."

"Why don't you run away?"

"I have no money. She sees to that. If I had I'd

go not to Egypt, but to Crete where I have cousins. They'd take care of me and let me be a man among men. Then when I was older and had learned to be afraid of no one, I'd go back and stir up a revolution."

"Money!" She sighed. "The men of Athens have so much and the women hardly know what it looks like, however large their dowry may have been. I, too, would run away if I had a chest full of drachmæ—and knew where to go."

"You are unhappy?" he asked eagerly. "You, too? I know all about Alcibiades. He loves many women. Does he ill-treat you—a great gentleman like that?"

"Oh, no, he is always quite courteous—but——" And she, too, poured out a story.

He thrust a stick savagely into the ground. "You—you——" he stammered. "That any man should be such a fool as to neglect *you*! And I can do nothing!" he cried wildly. "I, Setamon, born of one of the great houses of Egypt and descendant of the Pharaohs! Whose ancestors were once men like other men! If I were rich—if I were rich!"

"You could do nothing," said Hippareté sadly, but feeling singularly consoled. "I am the wife of the most powerful man in the State."

"Why don't you divorce him? You have cause enough. That wouldn't do me any good, for Tiy is a friend of your husband and would not permit me to marry you, but at least you might be happier."

"I asked him and he refused."

"But cannot a woman divorce her husband without his consent—if she have just cause?"

"If she has powerful male relatives who would help her, but my brother Callias is more his friend than mine. And Hermogenes has no influence. Even if Callias did consent he would marry me again at once, for he wouldn't know what to do with me. My dowry

would be returned and he would select the man least likely to squander it."

"Men make laws to advantage men, and women are no better. . . . Tell me, Hippareté——" He stammered and blushed but went on. "If I were rich and independent and met with your brother's approval—would you wish to marry me? It is a silly question, but I loved you the moment I saw you smiling into the water—and when you looked up you had Spring in your eyes. It would be something to hear you say——"

But Hippareté rose, shook out her chiton, and placed her hat sedately on her head.

"We will be friends," she said, lowering her long eyelashes. "But you must not say things like that."

"You are not going?" he asked in dismay.

"I must. It is the luncheon hour. But you may be here to-morrow, if you like——"

"To-morrow! Why not this afternoon?"

"No, no. To-morrow will be quite soon enough. And be sure to cut your hair."

She tripped down the path, turning once to throw him a smile over her shoulder.

XXXV

They met every day. Two unhappy young people in love for the first time—for Hippareté dismissed her brief infatuation for Alcibiades as unworthy of remembrance.

Hermogenes came to spend some days with his sister and was taken into her confidence. He was scandalized at first, but his sympathies were soon enlisted. He had loved a young wife who had died with her first child, and he had taken no one in her place. As she had left him a son the State could ask no more of him, and he had hoped to welcome his sister to his house. This was not to be, and he finally decided to do what he could to make her happy.

One hope she might cherish. If she could deliver her petition with her own hand to the Archon he might grant her a divorce if he happened to be a man of haracter and willing to risk the displeasure of Alcibiades. If she were successful he would borrow a sum of money from Callias, who was very generous, nor likely to ask questions, equip a galley, and send them to Crete. The house slaves could be informed that she was going on a visit to one of her friends and it was natural to take the child with her. Her old nurse Thratta—who hated her master as much as she loved her mistress—would go also as a matter of course.

Hippareté, during those quiet neglected years in the inner quarters, had developed into a woman of decision. She went at once to Athens, accompanied by Thratta. They arrived in the evening and slipped into the house by the servants' entrance. Saon slept upstairs and rarely entered the court.

The next morning, Hippareté, heavily veiled, made her way to the law courts, the petition, written by her brother—she, alas! could not write—in her hand. She was obliged to cross the Agora, but at this season it was almost deserted. Only Socrates sat in a barber's shop discoursing to a few of his worshippers; hurrying dicasts on their way to the courts; men bargaining at the bazaars in the porches. No one glanced at the veiled woman and her servant.

Hippareté was almost breathless with excitement, but her step was brisk and determined. It was Thratta's part to keep her eyes roving and give warning should Alcibiades appear. But she knew he was likely to be in his office at this hour.

She had almost reached the headquarters of the Archon when she heard Thratta give a startled exclamation and at the same moment her arm was taken in a powerful clasp. Alcibiades had stepped down from one of the porches where he had been transacting business with a banker.

"What is this?" he asked in amazement. "What are you doing in Athens—and here?"

All was lost, but Hippareté threw back her veil and looked at him with cold hostile eyes.

"It was my intention to present a petition for divorce," she said distinctly. "And I know it would have been granted."

He took the paper from her hand and ran his eyes over it rapidly. His face flushed as he read. Half the hetæræ in Athens were cited.

"Who wrote this?" he demanded, but her eyes did not fall before the lightning in his.

"That I'll never tell you. You may beat me if you will, but I'll not tell."

"Alcibiades does not beat women. But you'll not get out of the house again."

Still holding her by the arm he marched her across the Agora. She was forced to submit to the humiliation, for to struggle would be useless and they were attracting enough attention as it was. She consoled herself with the thought that she still had vengeance within her power, however it might be delayed.

When they reached the house he looked at her in perplexity. All the slaves that took care of her part of the dwelling were in the country. He hardly could lock her up in this weather. And now that she had declared herself his enemy she would not hesitate to be a nuisance. Women were ever resourceful in annoying a man. He recognized for the first time that she was a woman of intelligence and character, and that her sweetness, as far as he was concerned, had turned into gall.

The fact that Setamon was visiting his cousin was too insignificant to claim a place in his memory, and even if he had recalled it, that unattractive silent youth would have been the last of his sex to inspire a doubt in his mind. Having got his way, his anger had sub-

sided and his one desire was to get rid of this woman as quickly as possible.

"If I let you return to the farm," he said, "will you swear to me by Hera, by Artemis, by Demeter, that you will make no further attempt to go before the magistrates."

"By Hera, Artemis, and Demeter I swear it." It was with an effort she made her voice sullen, for her heart was racing. The kind goddesses must have dictated the form of that oath.

"Very well," he said. "I shall send for a chariot at once. As for you——" He turned to the old slave, his eyes flashing; but Hippareté interposed with calm authority.

"Thratta knew nothing of my purpose. It is her place to obey when I command. I made no explanation."

"Go then, as soon as the chariot comes. And if I see either of you in Athens again before it is time for you to leave the farm, I'll lock you both up."

He left the house, and Hippareté went to the thalamos and filled a bag with coins from the Master's Chest. She knew that Alcibiades was too careless to miss them.

Hippareté, her brother, and Setamon had a long conference next morning in the wood. Hermogenes went to Piræus and returned two days later with the money he had borrowed from Callias, or what he had not laid out on a galley, men, and provisions. She informed her household that she intended to pay a visit, and accompanied by Thratta, drove her little pony cart that afternoon to the nearest bay on the Euripus, where Setamon and the galley awaited her. They turned the pony loose after hiding the cart in a wood, and the fugitives embarked. Little Alcibiades was not with them. Setamon, at the last moment, had shown an unexpected acumen and force of will. He believed that Alcibiades would not pursue his wife

and submit himself to the ridicule of the wits of Athens, but he would move heaven and earth to recover his son. There was no time to be lost, and Hippareté went weeping but strangely happy to her new life.

XXXVI

It was ten days before Alcibiades heard of Hippareté's flight. The slaves had been satisfied with her casual explanation, but finally Dicon became uneasy at her long absence, and fearing she might be ill, sent messengers to the estates of her friends. Nothing had been seen of her. Now thoroughly alarmed, he went to Athens and told his master that the Mistress had disappeared. He had no news to give of Setamon, for he hardly knew of his existence. Nor had Axiochus and Sostrata, to whom he had taken his trouble, considered the youth, for his visit had drawn to a close and they had sped him on his way to Phaleron.

Alcibiades, as his steward stammered out the story, and his mind grasped its meaning, was even more astonished than angry. He knew she would not dare break her oath and call down the vengeance of the goddesses. Still, if she was not with any of her friends in the country, she must be hidden in Athens. But where ?

After he had made the man tremble and cower with his wrath he questioned him closely. Who had visited the farm ? Hermogenes. No one else. He had been there twice.

Alcibiades went at once to the house of his brother-in-law. Hermogenes was absent. He obtained entrance by affecting interest in the boy, and remained long enough to assure himself that no woman was hidden in that little dwelling.

He returned to his house to pace up and down the aula, experiencing a medley of emotions. His vanity

was ruffled, for why should he, of all men, not keep a wife's devotion whether he neglected her or not? He was apprehensive for her safety, for after all she was his wife and the mother of his son. He was intensely angry that she dared defy him. He was fearful of a scandal that might make him ridiculous and assail his proud position in Athens. He would miss the pretty picture she made in the court, for as a decoration he had not ceased to value her.

And he had enough to think of without an upheaval in his domestic life.

Something must be done. Dicon, who had gone scouting in the city, returned empty of news. There was still Callias. It was possible that Hippareté had taken refuge with him, although hardly likely. She disliked her sister-in-law, a woman much older than herself and of no very agreeable disposition, and she had always stood in awe of her magnificent elder brother. But there was a possibility.

He sent for his horse and galloped down to Piræus and burst in upon Callias.

"Is Hippareté here?" he demanded without preamble. "Don't tell me she is not! Where else can she be?"

Callias, who was at luncheon, helped himself from a dish of oysters stewed with cheese. "My dear brother-in-law," he said with unruffled calm, "why this excitement? And what in Zeus' name are you talking about?"

By this time Alcibiades between apprehension and anger was almost beside himself. "Is she here and are you concealing her?" he shouted. "She must be here. I have been to Hermogenes' house. Dicon has inquired everywhere. I tell you she has disappeared—and you sit there eating! I'll have your house searched!"

"Oh, no, you will not, Alcibiades. You will take the word of Callias that she is not here, and that he

knows naught of this matter. Calm yourself and sit down and share my luncheon."

"I have no appetite. How can you be sure she is not in the women's quarters?"

"Word would have been brought me at once. Neither my steward nor my wife would dare conceal anything from me. Why all this excitement over the disappearance of a woman? No doubt she is sulking somewhere, and will turn up in due course. All women love their children."

"But suppose she does not? She may have escaped into a neighbouring state. A fine scandal that will make!"

"And you prefer to be the author of your own scandals! Well, there *would* be a fine one if she has run off with another man."

"That is impossible. She never sees a man. Even at her friends' houses in the country she would dine alone with them were there men in the house."

"The woman doesn't live who won't manage to find a man if she wants one," observed Callias cynically. "And Hippareté astonished me when I saw her last. She sent for me in haste, and I went to her at once, not knowing what had happened. But it was merely to beg me to persuade you to give her a divorce. I told her it was the duty of wives to submit to their husbands in all things, and she flew at me like one of Tiy's cats. She told me in the plainest Greek I ever listened to what she thought of me, of you, of our sex in general. I learned then for the first time that she was a woman of spirit. Be sure she has found someone more to her liking and gone off with him."

His mind had leaped to the truth, for it was unlike Hermogenes to ask for a large sum of money, but he had no intention of communicating it to this fiery brother-in-law.

Alcibiades was striding up and down the long room. "I will have all Hellas combed for her," he cried.

"No doubt she has escaped over the mountains into Bœotia."

"If she has you'd not be able to compel her return. The Bœotians would like nothing better than to balk you—and make all Hellas ring with the scandal. My advice is to do nothing. If she is merely sulking she will return. If she has gone with some man—well, you will know in due course, and divorce her."

He sincerely hoped Alcibiades would take the case to the courts, and without delay; he would like nothing better than to see those twenty talents in his own chests, or let out at huge profit to one of the grain merchants.

But Alcibiades had no intention of returning those talents. Nor of divorcing Hippareté, whether she had disgraced herself or not. He too had given a son to the State, and one wife was enough for any man's life-time.

"There must be no scandal," he said imperiously. "You were right there. I'll not be the butt of the comic poets. Old Cratinus, after almost begging his bread in the streets, has been set on his feet again by his friends, and is at work on a comedy for the next Dionysia. He has always been an enemy of my house. I can see the title of the play he would hasten to write: 'The Desperate Wife, or the Deserter Deserted!' No, by Zeus, it shall be hushed up somehow. But I'll have private inquiries made throughout the city and Attica. Find out what you can from Hermogenes. I'll not be surprised if he's at the bottom of this. If he's dared meddle in my affairs——" He went out, slamming the door behind him.

XXXVII

ONCE more on his horse he bethought himself of Tiy. He had formed the agreeable habit of consulting her

in all things, and here surely was a problem for a woman to solve.

He found her pacing up and down the terrace of her villa by the sea, and, for the first time in his knowledge of her, she looked disturbed, almost agitated.

"Setamon has disappeared!" she exclaimed as he dismounted and ran up the steps of the terrace. "I sent to Axiochus asking why he had not sent my brother home as he promised, and have just heard that he left the farm ten days ago. What can have become of him?"

Alcibiades stared at her for a moment as if stupefied. Then he burst into wild laughter. "By all the gods, he has eloped with Hippareté!"

It was Tiy's turn to stare. "Have you gone mad?" she asked in consternation. "Tell me what you mean?"

"Setamon disappeared ten days ago. Hippareté disappeared ten days ago. She is not at the house of any of her friends, nor with either of her brothers. My estate joins that of my cousin. Setamon! Great Zeus on Olympus!"

For the first time in his life his vanity had been cut to the quick. He reeled, almost fainted. *Setamon!*

Tiy recovered herself and stood with the curves pressed out of her lips. "It must be," she said. "Remember that Setamon is a pretty boy, however unworthy to succeed Alcibiades. The girl was lonely and neglected. He unhappy and of an age to fall in love. They had only to meet. We must accept what has befallen and make the best of it. Secrecy is to be considered first—but where could they have got the money? Or have they wandered over the mountains, begging their way as they go? After all, they are nothing but children."

Alcibiades recalled the new Hippareté, whose acquaintance he had made some twelve days ago. "No," he said. "Hippareté is no child. She is

intelligent and has developed much force of character. They got money somewhere, either from Axiochus or Hermogenes—although I do not believe my cousin would betray me. Hermogenes is devoted to her, and may have borrowed it. If that is true he shall answer to me."

Tiy took his arm and led him within, for the sun was hot on the water. They walked up and down the cool aula, discussing the matter more quietly.

"We have only one thing to think of," she said. "This misfortune must be concealed from the world. I shall announce that I have sent Setamon back to Egypt—I remember I spoke of it to one or two of my friends. Would that I *had* sent him, but I delayed until I could find some one to take charge of him . . . let me think."

"Yes, think for me, Tiy," he said gratefully. "If the Persians were landing at Marathon, or my enemies had laid one of their plots to ruin me, I should know how to act—who would believe that a mere woman could fill the brain of Alcibiades with confusion! Would that I had locked her up!" And then he smiled for the first time. "It consoles me somewhat that you had as little foresight as I——"

"I have the solution! Hippareté went mad. You found her wandering in the woods and have secluded her in your country house with a faithful woman slave——"

"Thratta, her old nurse, went with her."

"What could be better? No one will think of questioning your story. What will the gossips say?" She too smiled. "That Alcibiades was enough to drive any woman mad! But the world in general will never hear of it. It takes no interest in wives. Wives who are never seen. You must confide in Axiochus and Sostrata, but I fancy you can trust them. Her friends will be told that story and asked to keep their counsel. They will hope for her recovery, and they

will enjoy the secret. I would suggest death, but all your clan and all her friends would expect to be invited to the funeral. Send at once for the slaves and tell them the same story—and that if they dare even to discuss the subject among themselves they will be sold in a land where slaves are not as kindly treated as they are in Athens. And now we will go in to luncheon and forget it, Alcibiades. What is past is past.''

Setamon and Hippareté were never heard of in Athens again. Callias forced the truth from Hermogenes, but not their destination. He gave him money to keep himself in comfort for a year on the sacred island of Delos, where he would be safe from the wrath of Alcibiades.

The explanations of Tiy and Alcibiades were accepted by the few to whom they were made, and not even the gossips of the market-place ever heard a hint of that romance.

BOOK II

BOOK II

I

TIY, on an afternoon in the following spring, deliberately provoked a quarrel between Alcibiades and Androcles, determined to make the latter show his hand before the First Citizen left Athens for the Peloponnesus. One secret enemy during his absence might accomplish more evil than those whose motives were known to all men, and whose every move was watched by the spies of Critias.

She had told him nothing of her intentions but had contrived to get the two men to her house at the same time, and closed her door to all others.

She too had Thasian wine, a potation not to be refused by Androcles even in the daytime, when Athenians rarely drank. Under its fiery stimulation and her more subtle direction he began to boast of the superior abilities with which the gods had endowed him, and when Alcibiades laughed, his eyes snapped in his flushed face and his red hair bristled.

"You are nothing but a renegade like Pericles," he said truculently. "Aristocrats who pretend to love the Demos! It is enough to make the gods laugh and weep. All you care for is personal glory. You'd throw over the Demos to-morrow if the Oligarchs were strong enough—and it is the Oligarchs who should rule, not tanners and potters and marble cutters! But we've only to wait! And I, Androcles son of Proteas, shall lead them. We are growing stronger every day."

"We?" asked Alcibiades gently; he had divined

Tiy's purpose. "But you are a member of my club, Androcles."

"Yes, I am! But——" His befuddled brain heard a warning bell in the depths, and he strove to disentangle himself. "We were Oligarchs to begin with, weren't we? Why shouldn't we be again? Do not all things change in Athens?"

"There has been a change recently. It is too soon for another. Why excite yourself now? But you are an insignificant member of my club and if you choose to leave it—go, by all means. No one will miss you less than I, for I recall no occasion upon which you have been of use to me, either in thought or action." His eyes glittered through narrowed lids as he watched this man whom he had known from childhood and accepted carelessly as a friend. He was very angry, but sober, for he never drank before evening.

"Well, I've kept my ears open—and I didn't come here to be insulted by you. You—you—who think yourself a son of Zeus. You are lucky, that's all. Why should you have had more gifts from the gods than all other men together? Why should Athens be ruled by the Demos? Athens the greatest city in the world? The Eupatridæ forced to ask favours of a tanner for seven years? Athens belongs to the nobles, I tell you! And it will not be long now before she comes to her senses."

"And how will you go about it?" asked Alcibiades suavely.

"Get rid of you first." Goaded between fury and wine Androcles neither knew nor cared what revelations he made. "We'll pull you down before another year is out. You—to go on a triumphal progress through the Peloponnesus—something no citizen has ever done before. You are trying to break the peace with Sparta that you may win more glory in another war, and make yourself Tyrant of Athens. But the clubs of Phæax and Euphiletus are as powerful as yours and have an

understanding with Hyperbolus—you will see—you will see—you will be in exile yet." And he drank to that hope.

"Worms, all of you," said Alcibiades calmly. "You are no match for me, nor would you dare defy me with the truth if you were sober." He changed his tone suddenly. "Now get out of this house, and never dare enter it again!"

"It's not your house," sputtered Androcles. "Or is it?" And he leered at Tiy.

Alcibiades sprang to his feet, caught Androcles by the back of his mantle, rushed him to the entrance, administered a powerful kick, and slammed the door behind a sobbing prostrate figure.

"You were right," he said, as he returned to Tiy. "You warned me before, but he has always behaved with decorum in the club, and not even Critias has suspected him. I have been too busy to give him a thought. Even under the influence of wine at the banquet he has never revealed himself before. Well, thanks to you, he is out in the open at last." And he smiled down at her gratefully.

"You can safely leave your affairs in my hands and in those of Critias," she said. "I shall cultivate your enemies while you are away. I am told that Phæax, Andokides, Thessalus, Euphiletus and others are resentful because they have never been invited to my house. I shall send for Androcles as soon as you leave and make him understand that he has my sympathy. Be sure I shall have all their secrets before you return."

"You are the best and wisest of friends! I shall never question your judgment again." He stood staring at her. "Why is it," he exclaimed, "that I do not love you, nor you me? You are the most wonderful woman in the world and the most beautiful. And many women have loved Alcibiades. For a year now I have seen you almost daily—and we meet and talk as men! I did not know that such things could be.

Were Aspasia your age and had given me her intimate friendship I should have loved her long since. Is the lack in me—that I have not loved and won you ?"

He spoke thoughtfully, as if groping, still staring at her. He fancied that she stiffened a little and wondered if some modicum of vanity had filtered down with her scant woman's inheritance and he had wounded it. But her face looked more than ever like jewelled ivory as she answered him.

"I am too much like yourself, Alcibiades. And more 'man' than woman perhaps—for such are the women of Egypt. You are all 'man' and bestow such love as you are capable of on the most feminine of their sex. Be sure it is better as it is. If you had imagined yourself in love with me when I came to Athens, and I with you, we should be enemies to-day, for each would have attempted to dominate the other and neither would have yielded."

"Yes—yes . . . I had the intention of winning you and then using you badly," he said impulsively. "You will forgive me, now that I respect and like you more than any man I know—and there are men of great ability in Athens. Indeed, I love you, for do not men love their friends ? I love Socrates and Aristophanes and Axiochus—two or three others—but you more than all."

"Except Alcibiades !" she said, laughing. "But I was quite aware of your intention. I find men singularly transparent here in Athens. Our own are subtle and often deceitful. I was very angry at first and made up my mind to lead you on and then treat you with the scorn you deserved. But—well—I know nothing of the wiles of these women to whom you are accustomed ; and it was impossible to help liking you. I made up my mind again—this time to win your friendship."

"And you have that ! I trust you as I trust no man. You alone have known my plans all these months. I

informed my club only the day before I went to the Council. . . . You will not go off to Syracuse or Carthage?" he asked anxiously. "I would find you here when I return."

"I had intended to go this year, but I shall remain in Athens and take care of your enemies."

As soon as he returned to his house he sent for Nemea, to whom, in spite of his occupations, he had been reasonably constant.

She came at once, filled with agreeable expectations, for although it was not his habit to send for her in the daytime, he was leaving on the morrow and no doubt would combine a handsome present with tender farewells.

But he had no present for her nor was he in a tender mood.

"Has Theodoté ever told Androcles of that night at your house when we made sport of the Mysteries?" he demanded, without greetings.

Nemea concealed her surprise and replied promptly. "No, I am sure she has not. Did you not enjoin secrecy?"

"There is no telling what secrets women will not betray to their lovers if they think something may be got out of them in return. Probably she has known all along that Androcles hates me. He would give her a necklace for that gem."

"Of course she has! But I know she has not told him. If the truth were known she likes you better than Androcles—we were talking of that night not long since and she said she would never betray Alcibiades to Androcles."

"Ah! So you have known he is my enemy. Why did you not warn me?"

Nemea assumed an injured expression and pouted the full red lips that were so strangely at variance with her eyes. "You never talk to me, Alcibiades—not

as other men talk to intelligent hetæræ. To you a woman is no more than Aphrodite come to earth."

"Quite true. I have known only two women in my life who were worth talking to. Now listen to me. Do you tell Theodoté and those other two women that if they dare betray Alcibiades they will be banished from Athens. And so will you. You may go now."

"But you will send for me when you return?" she asked pleasantly, but averting her eyes. She hardly knew whether she hated this arrogant creature or not, but she had no wish to lose him. He was very generous, and no woman had ever held him so long. She was the most envied hetæra in Athens.

"I may or I may not. I am not thinking of women at present. Saon goes with me, but my steward Dicon will attend to your wants. Entertain as you will."

"And suppose I take another lover?" she asked demurely.

"What difference does that make? You will come if I call. You must go. I have much to attend to."

Thought Nemea, as she made her way through the narrow streets to her own house: If he ever does make me hate him I'll not stop to consider whether I shall be hunted out of Athens or not.

Then she sighed and wondered what it felt like to be so sure of oneself that enemies were no more than hungry dogs to be kicked from one's path. Zeus himself could be little more independent and magnificent than Alcibiades. But he had weak places in his armour!

II

Shortly after his re-election Alcibiades had represented to the Council the advantages of a progress through the Peloponnesus, winning the allegiance of certain states, either autonomous or former members

of the Confederacy. He stated bluntly that his purpose was to weaken Sparta further, for in no other way could peace be preserved. And now was the moment to accomplish his object; Sparta had recently met with a severe reverse at the hands of Thessaly, and this, coming so soon after the insult visited upon her by Elis, had further weakened her power in the Peloponnesus. She was no longer regarded with awe and fear, and this was the moment for Athens to strengthen her own hand.

The Council demurred, but his logic prevailed, and his eloquence won in the Ecclesia. Hyperbolus followed him on the Bema, shouted and hurled invective like Cleon of old when seeking to turn the Demos against Pericles, but was howled down. Nor did they show Phæax, Thessalus, or Nicias, who had been elected a Strategos again in the spring Ecclesia, greater favour.

He left Athens with a small retinue of hoplites and bowmen, although his way lay through Megara, who had refused to be a party to the Treaty with Sparta and hated the Athens that had reduced her to comparative poverty. But Alcibiades had no fear of being molested. Megara might sulk but she would hardly invite the immediate vengeance of her neighbour.

They left Athens by the Dipylon Gate and rode down the Sacred Way in the fresh morning air to the singing of birds heralding the rising of the sun-god as devoutly as Tiy. As Alcibiades passed the tomb of Pericles he saluted, and sighed unconsciously. The greatest man of his time, one of the greatest of all time, who had won an imperishable name in history —now a handful of dust in an urn! Like all Greeks he resented the inevitability of old age and death. But youth and the thirst for glory were strong within him, and he forgot Pericles and death a moment later.

It was thirteen miles to Eleusis and the road was

lined with tombs for the greater part of the way. The farms had been devastated by the Lacedæmonians, but grape vines and olive trees were struggling once more for life.

The great Temple of Demeter in Eleusis had been destroyed by the Persians but rebuilt although not finished by Pericles. It was a superb Doric structure, the secret inner hall excavated from the solid rock of the hill. The Propylæa was almost as imposing as that on the Acropolis of Athens, and beyond the walls were other temples, statues, and shrines; but although Alcibiades lingered for a moment to admire a beauty he had enjoyed many times, the only object he saluted was a house in the village: the birthplace of Æschylus.

Of all the immortal dramas created by the tragic poets the *Agamemnon* was his favourite, although he had no great respect for a man who had permitted himself to be fooled to his death by a woman. He flattered himself that he would have seen through Clytemnestra, and pitched his tent without the walls.

The wells of the little town were ringed with violets, and the light sparkling air was rich with their perfume. The Thriasian plain showed every colour under the sun in its wild flowers. The Bay of Eleusis was opalescent, and the red rugged mountains of Salamis opposite were softened with the greens of spring. As he rode through Megara the two hills on which the town was built might have been a necropolis. Even the children had been driven from the streets. Alcibiades smiled to himself, but scowled openly as he rode through the flourishing olive groves, vineyards, and farms. There had been no devastation here! And Attica but thirty miles away.

He distracted his mind with the beauty of the Saronic Gulf and the long ridges of the Peloponnesian mountains sloping gently down to the water. In the evening light their outlines melted into the semblance of half-re-

clining, long-limbed women, violet-robed, rose-crowned, in some ancient attitude of adoration.

They camped for the night under the cliffs, and rode on in the dawn by the rich blue waters of the Corinthian Gulf, turned south under the towering heights of the Acropolis, and reached the Argive plain early in the afternoon. Here, too, were the scarlet anemone and the purple cistus, the tender green of wheat, silver olive groves, villages embowered in fig trees. That great plain, the scene of so many fierce battles in the past, had, through the friendship of Argos with both Sparta and Athens, escaped all the penalties of war. At the northern end of the valley were the imposing ruins of Agamemnon's palace on its rock, and far away to the south the Cyclopean remains of Tiryns, both sacrificed to the jealousy of the Argives. Half-way rose the splendid Temple of Hera on its three terraces, rebuilt near its old site where the chiefs of the expedition against Troy had sworn allegiance to Agamemnon.

The great valley, surrounded by its rocky fortress of mountains, its blooming soil, its impressive ruins, its temples and tombs, the white marble city of Nauplia looming above the dark blue water some twelve miles away, Argos the red-roofed, under the shadow of Larissa, was a picture that always gave Alcibiades one of his few quiet pleasures. Like all Greeks, he never went into ecstasies over the beauties of nature, but as a setting for the inspired creations of man he gave them a grateful appreciation.

A mile from Argos, he saw the gates of the city wall open and a regiment of cavalry dash out. It was his escort and the courtesy he had expected.

He galloped into the town to the cheering of many men in the crowded streets and Agora, but went at once to the house of his relative Calliteles for a bath and fresh raiment.

At the evening meal, to which the chief members of the Council had been invited, he learned the news

he had come to seek. The Oligarchs were disaffected and inclined to Sparta, but powerless against the strength of the Demos. Mantinea, Patræ and other cities were awaiting his visits with impatience. The Argives had cooked up a grievance against Epidaurus and proposed to attack her as soon as Alcibiades returned from the north. Much of his correspondence during the past six months had been directed to this end. Epidaurus, on the eastern coast of the Peloponnesus, was almost directly opposite the island of Ægina, one of the outposts of Athens. In possession of the allies, days, money, possibly lives, would be saved in time of war, for forces could be sent directly across the narrow strip of water, instead of by the long sea route to the bay—the "Port of Argos"—on the western coast of the lesser peninsula.

Alcibiades had given no hint of this to the Athenian Council, but he knew that if Epidaurus were conquered, and he presented them with a route into the Peloponnesus, as disconcerting to Megara, Corinth, and Sparta as it would be advantageous to Athens, his conspiracy would meet with approval. If the project failed he should keep his part in it a secret from all but his Argive fellow-plotters, and announce upon his return that he had felt it his duty, being on the spot, to give them the benefit of his long experience in war.

The next morning he spoke in the great theatre on the side of the mountain and gave his message of good will from Athens to a cheering host.

III

Escorted by a regiment of cavalry, to be a permanent part of his retinue while he remained in the Peloponnesus, he left Argos on the following morning, cheered on his way, flowers strewn before him. He visited the important City State, Mantinea, where his personal triumphs were repeated and his words listened to

eagerly. The officials insisted upon swelling his retinue when he left. Strategos of Athens, proudest of all democracies, neither King nor Tyrant, no monarch had ever made a more royal progress.

He crossed the harsh mountains and barren valleys of Arcadia, and visited an enthusiastic Elis, then turned his attention to the towns of Achaia. He won their consent to an alliance with Athens, and the promise of the executive Council and the Demos of Patræ to build Long Walls from the city to the coast, thus placing themselves under the protection of Athens by sea.

One of the most important strategic points of any country was the narrow entrance from the sea to the Gulf of Corinth. On the northern shore the fortress of Naupactus, a possession of the Athenians, had inflicted damage for many years on the commerce of Corinth. Opposite was Cape Rhium, which Alcibiades purposed also to annex, thus practically bottling in the Corinthians, as well as the Sicyons. He projected a naval station and the erection of a fort.

His progress through the central and northern part of the Peloponnesus created an unparalleled sensation, and both revived the old awe of Athens and strengthened the hostile feeling toward Sparta. Alcibiades was showered with costly gifts, a tribute to his personal charm as much as to the powerful State he represented.

He returned to Argos to find that tranquil city feverish with the news that King Agis of Sparta, with all his army and reinforced by two of his allies, was on the march north. What his purpose was no man could guess, unless, indeed, he had got wind of the Argive intentions and was on his way to the assistance of Epidaurus.

Alcibiades held an immediate conference with the Council and the five Generals of the Argive army, and all agreed upon the wisdom of waiting until Agis declared his purpose. Alcibiades was never reckless

in matters of war. He was a born general and took no unnecessary risks.

But the interval of anxiety was of short duration. A runner brought in word that Agis had returned to Sparta and disbanded his troops. Sacrifices had been made constantly on the march and the omens were unfavourable.

Then the Argives found themselves in another quandary. Valuable time had been lost. The month of Karneius was the period of a "happy truce," during which no Dorian state might engage in warfare with another. It was as binding upon the Argives as upon the Spartans. And but three days remained before the first of the month!

Alcibiades, however, solved the difficulty.

"It is now the twenty-sixth," he said to the hastily summoned members of the Council and the Generals. "Tricks have been played with the calendar before. Let every day remain the twenty-sixth until our purpose is accomplished. The Karneian month will ever be ahead of us, and the piety of no one in the army offended. Nothing could be better for us: neither the Spartans nor their allies will move until the season of holy truce has passed. Sparta because she is a slave to omens, and her allies because they hate her and resent being dragged into her rows with no advantage to themselves."

The Argives were startled at the boldness of the proposition, but Alcibiades overcame all objections. The Greek year being divided into twelve lunar months of twenty-nine and thirty days alternately, and as this arrangement could be made to fit only approximately with one revolution of the earth round the sun, there was often confusion, and arbitrary reckonings of time. The most influential of the Argive Generals, Thrasyllus, supported Alcibiades, the others gave way, and the troops marched for Epidaurus that same afternoon.

They spent a fortnight laying waste the surrounding territory, preliminary to besieging the city, and then word came that Nicias had persuaded the Athenians to convoke a Congress of all the Peloponnesian cities at Mantinea for the purpose of discussing the terms of a general peace. The Corinthian deputy, however, had pointed out the absurdity of assembling a peace congress while the Argives, assisted by an Athenian Strategos, were waging war at the moment against Epidaurus, and on the flimsiest of pretexts. The Argives, after earnest deliberation with envoys, were persuaded to return home until the deliberations of the Congress should be concluded.

IV

ALCIBIADES was not in a good humour as he rode toward Athens. He was unaccustomed to the balking of his deep-laid schemes, and he cursed the folly of Council and Ecclesia for listening to a parcel of old men when a few weeks more would have witnessed the fall of Epidaurus ; a vast benefit to Athens, and one of his most spectacular triumphs.

Now it was all to do over again, and at a time when no trick with the calendar would avail. Epidaurus, he knew, had twice sent to Sparta for assistance, and Agis, like as not, would move his troops the moment the "truce" was over. His own plans for war lay farther in the future. He had wanted a comparatively peaceful conquest of Epidaurus, and the greater the triumph therefore. If the Argives returned to their siege and were confronted with the Spartans, Athens, by the terms of the Treaty, would be obliged to send reinforcements, and she would resent that. To Pluto with Nicias and the easily swayed Athenians !

What had Critias, Aristophanes, Axiochus, other members of his club, been doing ? They all knew how to use their tongues in the Ecclesia. And either

Nicias had suspected his purpose and determined to balk him, or was led away once more by his delusions. Peace! Permanent peace! As if such a thing could ever be in a collection of jealous states of the same blood, who had nothing to do but fight one another. There hadn't been two consecutive months since the "Peace" that some state had not been at war with its neighbour.

He had a second cause for anger. Two days before he left the Epidaurian territory he had received word from Naupactus that Corinth and Sicyon had sent forces to Cape Rhium to prevent the building of his fort. He had hoped that proceedings in that remote spot could be kept secret until he was able to send battle-ships to protect it. This could not be done until he stated his case in the Ecclesia, and the Epidaurian project was too important to neglect. Now it was too late, for to send triremes to confront the enemies would be equivalent to a declaration of war. A demonstration in time might have frightened them and caused delay, but on the spot and on watch they would precipitate an engagement. Unrest and turmoil in Athens again, and Alcibiades its cause. It was not good enough. Rhium must wait.

He had sent no messenger ahead to announce his coming, and he rode through Athens at an hour when even the working-men were taking their post-luncheon nap. After a bath and a hasty meal, he mounted a fresh horse and galloped to Phaleron. Tiy would give him all the news and she was the only one of his friends with whom he would not quarrel in his present mood. He had no desire for a break with any of his followers. They were as quick-tempered as himself.

He found her in the court of her villa seated by the cool splashing fountain. She rose with an exclamation of surprise and a flash in her long oval eyes.

"This is unexpected," she said as she shook his hand warmly. "But not wholly so. I knew when that

Peace Congress was called your plans would be upset."

"Upset!" And he delivered himself of his pent-up emotions and his opinion of the Athenians.

"Fools and children!" he exclaimed. "You never know where you are with them, unless you have your hand on them every minute. Pericles, although he had them tamed as no man before or since, dared not leave Athens during the first year of the war. And I have but just begun! They love me to-day and may hate me to-morrow. What have my enemies been doing? Of course you have received them and learned something of their plans?"

"I have turned them inside out," she said smiling. "Two of them are in love with me. I have learned something of women's ways since I came to Athens, although I have met no women, unless you count that night at Nemea's. It is in the atmosphere, I suppose. Or seeing constantly so many men half of whose thoughts, at least, are given to women——"

"Have you accepted any of them as a lover?" he asked sharply.

"No!" And her flexible mouth seemed to have added new curves and curls. "I have no intention of sacrificing myself to that extent even for Alcibiades. They are growing impatient and I shall have to dismiss them soon. I have only been able to hold them at bay thus far because I am an enigmatic foreign woman of a country far beyond their experience. They cannot make me out. But they have even offered to divorce their wives! As they have sons they would make no protest against taking an alien second wife. It has been a fascinating game—once more you have made my life interesting in Athens!"

"I should like to have been behind a door and watched your tactics," he said gaily. "I cannot imagine Tiy enamouring any man. What a violation of your proud Egyptian manhood!"

"I didn't enamour. I took a serious tone. Deeply

interested in them, but unaccustomed to their ways, and begged them to be considerate of one who knew naught of love-making. Then interested in their proposals of marriage—and their assurance that I never should be shut up in the women's quarters!" And she gave her rich contralto laugh.

He laughed also and regarded her with pleasure. She wore a thin white linen garment embroidered about the base with red geometric figures, and her favourite red sash. Her hair was wrapped about her head and confined by a gold net that hung loose to her shoulders. Her only ornament was an elaborately carved scarab that had belonged to her great ancestress, and worn always.

A charming picture in spite of her heroic size and the unfeminine strength of her face. He half-regretted that he had renounced his early purpose—then gave a mental shrug. Far better as it was, and far more novel. She made no appeal to his passion and as a friend she was unique.

"Tell me what you have learned," he said. "What are those spawn up to?"

"They are planning your ostracism."

"What!" Alcibiades stared and then laughed.

"Not a word of it is known outside the clubs, and Critias knew nothing of it until I told him, for they have managed to purge their clubs of spies. It is the desire of Hyperbolus to get rid of Nicias, and the hostile clubs of the young nobles pretend to agree with him, hoping to persuade him at the last moment to turn the votes against you."

"Hm," said Alcibiades. "Hm. Well, we shall see. So Hyperbolus fears Nicias more than he does me?"

"He thinks the Demos is more likely to be faithful to Nicias in the end because he is all for peace, and he hopes to get rid of you by preventing your re-election next year. He and other members of his club are constantly assuring the working-men and

farmers, the small merchants and manufacturers, that all your efforts are directed toward a breaking of the peace with Sparta that you may lead the Athenian army in war and win greater glory and power. He has endeavoured to turn their pride in your triumphant progress through the Peloponnesus into resentment, and in this he is assisted by Androcles, Nicias, Phæax, Thessalus and others, who have thundered on the Bema. They have made the most of that! They accuse you, of course, of provoking the trouble between Argos and Epidaurus, although they have no proof, and so far have made little impression on the Demos. When they heard of the trick with the calendar and asserted that no one but you would ever have thought of such a thing, the Ecclesia merely laughed. They might have known the Athenians would appreciate a joke of that kind.

"But the people listen to Hyperbolus when he whispers among them that you are the most extravagant man of your time and have access to the public treasure. He has gone so far as to assert that your own private fortune is exhausted. But when Critias got wind of this he took the Bema at the next meeting and turned that too into a joke. He gave a most imposing list of your resources. It all comes to this: the only real distrust your enemies have managed to instil is that in your thirst for glory and action you may plunge them again into war."

"And so I shall when the time comes. Every young man in Athens wants war for that matter, even my enemies. I am not the only one who has a thirst for action and glory. It is the middle-aged, the elderly, the little money-makers, the farmers and workingmen who fear it. But I would have waited a year or two until Athens had had time to forget. . . . What has Critias been doing? Have you seen him frequently? How is it he has not met those other men here?"

"He comes in the morning; they never before the late afternoon or evening. I have given many banquets! Of course all the members of your club and those friendly to you are at work countervailing your enemies. Few of the young men have left Athens this summer, although they spend the hot hours in Piræus or here by the sea. It is well you have returned, for although Critias is the cleverest of men he lacks genius. You are the one to look after your own affairs."

"That I'll do," he said, frowning. "But we must never lose sight of the fickleness of the Athenians. Look at their re-election of Nicias. There was no man they despised so completely last year. I can manage them unless we are driven into a war too soon. Then they may turn against me—for a time. I would get them back. But the Argives are now determined to possess Epidaurus. The stupid re-election of Nicias has prevented its quick subjection—and Alcibiades the credit of a brilliant and far-sighted piece of statesmanship. I may be selfish and self-seeking, ambitious and unscrupulous, but nevertheless I am the one man to restore Athens to her old power in Hellas. I need only a year or two to win over the majority of the Peloponnesian states and then turn suddenly and crush Sparta. Then should I be credited the wisest statesman of my time! A reputation not even Pericles could rival, for he sought to bring all the states together in peace under the ægis of Athens, and failed. Now, only the gods know what will happen. . . . But let us forget politics. Have you heard aught of Setamon and Hippareté?"

"Yes, they are in Crete—and married."

For a moment his stare was almost vacant.

She laughed. "I fancy I looked like that when I received the letter from my cousin. I have relatives in Knossus, and from time to time there has been business correspondence between their house and mine. I suspected the destination of the fugitives

and wrote to this cousin, telling him that if Setamon had gone to Crete to take care of him and keep me informed of his condition. The information was startling. Setamon had run away with a young girl, one Dioné, daughter of a Corinthian, whose name they chose to keep a secret. Dioné had been visiting an aunt in Athens who was a friend of mine, but encouraged the elopement. Quite an elaborate romance, but I suppose they thought it safer, as Crete has far more commerce with Athens than with Corinth, and they feared that two and two might be added if Hippareté's disappearance leaked out. I believe they are very happy."

Alcibiades rose. "I fear I did not appreciate Hippareté! And perhaps it is as well I am rid of her. I fancy Setamon will be the one to wear the veil in that family. But they cannot live on the bounty of your relatives. I shall send her, through you——"

"Setamon is provided for. I have sent him his dowry—although not to him personally. He will enjoy it as long as he remains in Crete and stays away from both Athens and Egypt."

"Well, that's that. And now I must go and call a meeting of my club. As your new admirers come to dinner I'll not see you again until to-morrow morning."

V

BEFORE his club met that night the city was startled by the news that Nicias and his colleagues were returning to Athens. The Peace Congress had broken up in disorder. No one could agree with any one else, all pretensions being equal.

There were long faces in the Agora. If Argos returned to the siege of Epidaurus—and Agis marched against her—and Athens were called upon for troops . . . Nicias would protest, and he hardly could have

fallen from favour; the failure of the Congress was no fault of his. . . . But that firebrand Alcibiades . . .

It was a bright moonlight night and the banquet took place in the court, cooled by the Etesian wind. Private matters were ignored until the slaves had retired after bringing in the wine. Then they discussed the plot of Hyperbolus to call an ostrakismos the following spring. The gods only knew what might happen between then and now, and they weighed every possibility.

Alcibiades was reclining with his eyes half-closed, but for a time he said nothing. When the others had talked themselves out he looked up with a smile more sinister than subtle.

"There is one thing we can do," he said. "Like it or not, there may be no other course open to us. Our clubs must unite with the enemy and turn the vote against Hyperbolus. And a good riddance to Athens."

"Oh!" "Ah!" "Yes!" "No!" Many exclamations ran round the couches.

"Unite with our enemies!" said Polystratus, tugging at his black beard. "I loathe the idea of even speaking to those men."

"So do I," said Alcibiades dryly. "But I dislike even more the idea of exile. And where would you all be without me?"

"But can it be done?" asked Axiochus. "They hate us even more than we hate them."

"Where would *they* be without Nicias? Not one of them has even a fluctuating power over the Athenians. I tell you that if the worst comes to the worst they will be glad to unite."

"No farmer will write your name on a sherd. I can promise you that," said Aristophanes.

"Yes, but Athens is not made up of farmers," replied Alcibiades impatiently. "We can afford to take no chances."

Charmides frowned. "I don't like the idea of

ostracizing Hyperbolus—that Cleon in hyperbole! It is a compliment reserved for men of importance and gentlemen. It is too much honour for that foul-mouthed lamp-maker."

"Alcibiades is right," said Critias. "You would not have that foul-mouthed lamp-maker ruling Athens again, I hope? And with Alcibiades out of the way he'd soon regain the power hĕ inherited from Cleon. Nicias has no force of character and no charm. Hyperbolus has shown himself capable of a definite policy, and a deep one—to get rid of Nicias by ostracism, and Alcibiades by preventing his re-election next year. This he cannot do if the Argives refrain from involving themselves in war with Sparta, but if they do not, and we are obliged to go to their assistance—then the fat is in the fire. Alcibiades will be accused of deliberately instigating a war with Sparta, for to him we owe the alliance with Argos. Do you think the Argives will march on Epidaurus again?" he asked Alcibiades.

"They are probably on their way now. And as I no doubt shall lead the troops if the Ecclesia decide that we go to their aid I may be out of Athens for months. Therefore I have suggested this policy now that you may act upon it if I am not here when the ostrakismos takes place."

"We'll do that!" cried Anytus. "Although I, like Charmides, think it too great a compliment to pay Hyperbolus. And Pericles was the last man they tried to ostracize! And Thucydides son of Melesias, the victim, a great gentleman and orator! Well, there have been many and singular changes in Athens."

"The golden age of Pericles!" Callias sighed deeply.

"Is over!" cried their chief. "But the golden age of Alcibiades will follow. It is I who will conquer Sparta—exterminate her. And that was something Pericles was unable to do."

"Had he lived he would have done it—or, rather,

put an end to the war." Aristophanes spoke sharply. "And before ten long years had passed. We should have had peace after Sphakteria."

"True," said Alcibiades. "But unfortunately he died. And it would have been a peace with Sparta nearly as strong as ever—and Brasidas alive. Pericles avoided war when he could. Sparta would have been nursing her strength, and by this time, no doubt, assembling her forces for a renewal of the war. I believe in no peace measures that are not final. We must fight until Lacedæmonia and Bœotia are trembling at our feet."

Aristophanes rose. "Do I understand you aright?" he asked peremptorily. "Are you meditating another war?"

"And have you imagined for a moment the Peace would last?"

"Will you answer my question? It is an honest one and deserves a straightforward answer."

"Yes, I will answer it. I wanted no war for two years to come. The State needs the rest, and I wished for due time to prepare the Athenians. Then I should have broken the Peace on the first pretext, for not until Sparta is negligible will Athens be supreme in Hellas. Now, we may have war whether we want it or not."

"And your fault if we do!" exclaimed Aristophanes angrily. "You alone are responsible for the alliance with Argos, for we were never consulted. How may any man be sure that you did not cajole the Argives into attacking Epidaurus?"

"What would have been my object?" asked Alcibiades coolly.

"Who knows what your reasons are for many things——"

Critias interrupted. "If it was Alcibiades' object to win a land route for our troops, he is justified. That is real statesmanship."

"It is better statesmanship to keep the Peace. What of Attica, that would suffer immediate invasion by the Lacedæmonians? Attica invaded and laid waste again!"

Alcibiades spoke with authority. "With the aid of our Peloponnesian allies Sparta would never cross the Megarid. My first act would be to see that Megara was laid waste and every inhabitant driven out. It would have been done long since if we had had the allies I have won to the Empire this past year. The Lacedæmonians would think twice before entering that territory and encountering the troops of Mantinea and Elis. They would have enough to do to take care of themselves against Athens, Argos, and our other allies."

"Sound policy!" exclaimed Critias. And all but the poet applauded. With the exception of Callias, their nostrils dilated as if they scented the battlefield from afar. But Aristophanes walked over to the bench where the mantles had been thrown and shook out his own.

He returned to face Alcibiades. "I resign from the club," he said, his voice hoarse with apprehension and regret. "I think no one has fought more bravely than I in a war that was forced upon us. But I am unalterably opposed to any war that may be avoided. Inevitable war is one thing and war for the sake of conquest and personal glory quite another. Your secrets are safe with me, but I work with you no longer."

Alcibiades too had risen. He was staring at Aristophanes. "And what of our old friendship?" he cried. "Do you desert me—you—Aristophanes—my oldest friend—and when I may need you most?"

"And is it then the privilege of an old friend to help the one he has loved most to his ruin? For it may mean nothing else—and more likely than not. I am no seer, no soothsayer, nor yet an oracle, but I do know

that Athens needs peace, not war, and was too often defeated during those ten disastrous years to be sure of conquering a still powerful state with powerful allies—Bœotia, Corinth, Megara, Tegea, Phokis, Lokris —what not ? You have within you the highest possibilities of statesmanship, Alcibiades, and if you would devote them to saving Athens from war now and in the future; your genius to keeping what we have and making this State as happy and prosperous as it was for long years under Pericles, you would be as immortal in history as he. But your ambition is inordinate, your passion for glory and power blinds you to all else. You must be ever in action, ever applauded, ever the centre of the stage. Unless you are more favoured of the gods than any man has ever been before you will ruin Athens in ruining yourself. That is my last word." And he wrapped his mantle about him and departed.

Callias was the first to break an uneasy silence. "I wonder is he right ?" he asked anxiously. "I am no lover of war myself. I love ease and luxury, the intellectual enjoyments that only peace can give us. Life was made for pleasure, not bloodshed, privations, and constant danger."

"Once more Alcibiades is right," said Critias impatiently. "You are safe enough in Piræus and your fortune was little affected by the war. You will always find sophists enough in Athens to talk all night at your tables. Now, tell us, Alcibiades, did you put Argos up to attacking Epidaurus ?"

"Yes, but I said nothing to you before I left because I could have no certain knowledge of her decision until I arrived there, and, indeed, was obliged to use much persuasion. But when she made up her mind she was more than eager for the conquest, not only because it would bring our forces to her aid more speedily in case of war, but add immeasurably to her importance. Remember, she has ever in view her renewed headship

in the Peloponnesus. There will be no holding her back now. If it hadn't been for that cursed Congress, Epidaurus would be in our hands to-day. Now war may come sooner than I would have had it."

"I hope it is not a bad omen that your plans have been upset," said Axiochus. "They were far-sighted, and had they succeeded would have brought you much renown, but now—who can tell what may happen?"

"Cease croaking!" cried Alcibiades gaily. "No man likes his plans upset less than I. But would I be Alcibiades if I could not make new plans when the old fail? Drink to my health and the damnation of Sparta."

VI

An envoy from Argos arrived with the news that their army was before Epidaurus and King Agis on the march. He reminded the Athenians that one of the terms of the Treaty was that each state should go to the aid of the other if summoned. The Ecclesia grumbled, but in like case they would have expected aid from Argos, and Alcibiades was sent to the Epidaurian territory with a thousand hoplites.

He returned almost immediately. Agis had marched as far as Karyæ, but the border-sacrifices proving unfavourable, had turned back. The Argives continued their ravages, but this they could accomplish by themselves.

He was exasperated and disappointed, for war was now inevitable, and his was not the temperament to welcome delay when nothing was to be gained from it. He took his ill-humour to Tiy, but found her less responsive than usual. She was walking up and down the terrace, her heavy brows lowered over brooding eyes. The sun was setting behind Ægina, and the blazing west shed a faint angry glow over a face that so often looked more ivory than human.

"This is the time the other men come, is it not?"

he began abruptly. "Are you expecting any of them? You look as if they had annoyed you beyond endurance and you were making up your mind to be rid of them."

She did not smile as he had expected but flashed him an odd doubting look. "No, it is not that," she said. "I expect no one to-night, for I was to have gone to a banquet given by Anytus, and sent him word this morning that I should not. . . . I hardly know whether or not I am glad you have come. . . ."

She turned away and leaned against a pillar, looking out over the violet sea.

"What is it?" he asked curiously, and forgetting his annoyances; he was always quick to respond to anything that promised interest, and he had not yet solved the enigma of this woman. How well did he know her after all? She might be an enemy in disguise, with subtle arts he had not encountered in his reasonably large experience of her sex.

To his surprise, as if his thoughts had winged their way into her mind, she turned and asked him abruptly: "You trust me, do you not?"

"Yes." He almost stammered. "Yes. Why should I not trust you, Tiy? Why do you ask such a strange question?"

"But you knew nothing of me when I came here save only that I was Tiy daughter of Setepeura, and of a great family in Egypt. Of me you knew nothing."

"That is true. And at first, I, as others, disliked you—but—well, you are Tiy. You chose to make us like you—what are you driving at?"

"You wondered why I came here? Why I took a house? There were many conjectures, were there not?"

"Yes—that you came on a political mission; possibly for aid in defying Persia. Also——" He hesitated.

"That I came to be a hetæra! Well, I had no reason for coming save my own will—but——"

"But what?" he asked impatiently, for by this time curiosity was devouring him, and he felt a faint stirring of anxiety. "Why shouldn't you come to live in Athens, the fairest city in the world? After the first surprise was over I thought no more about it. I never question the gifts of the gods. . . . But if there is something behind I wish to know it," he said imperiously. "You did not come as a spy, I suppose? That would not be like you, nor is there aught to spy on in Athens. Any stranger may come here and see what he will."

"No. I did not come as a spy. I think I shall tell you—let us go within. Dinner is ready."

The Nubian had thrust his hideous countenance into the sunset.

Alcibiades followed her into the aula, where the meal was to be served, and they sat opposite at one table.

The dinner was a light repast of vegetables and fruit suitable to the weather. Alcibiades was hungry after his sea voyage and would have liked a chicken, but curiosity tempered his appetite and the cakes at least were filling.

She refused to explain herself until the wine was brought in, and made him tell her of his futile expedition, but although he had come to talk about himself his account was listless and he ill-restrained his impatience. At last they were alone, and he said peremptorily:

"Now, Tiy, out with it! I know that you have something of import to tell me."

She sat back in her high straight chair, her arms along the rests, her hands hanging, almost limply. There was a strange immobility in her attitude, and in the faint light of the lamps she looked like a statue on a tomb, or perhaps like her own Sphinx, which he had heard much of but never seen. But when she spoke there was nothing cold nor remote in her voice, although at first it was with little of her usual decision.

"Yes, I shall tell you—although it may mean that I can never go back to Egypt. . . . Before I left Thebes I had a long talk with the Satrap, that Persian viceroy who is supposed to govern us, but who, like others before him, has learned that the less he interferes with us the better. This man came to our house often, and not being an Egyptian we treated him as an equal. . . . He said something to me during his last visit that I thought of often during the voyage and when I first came to Athens. Then I totally forgot it."

"Well?" asked Alcibiades. "Well?" He was leaning on one arm and pulling impatiently at the curl above his ear. "Did he want you to assassinate me?"

She smiled slightly. "Not quite that! On the contrary, your death by assassination or otherwise would cause consternation in Persia."

"Ah!" He sat up alertly. He began to see light.

"He gave me no definite instructions," she continued. "He dared not. But he talked much of the still bleeding wound Persia had received in her defeat by a small group of states like Hellas. A handful of men against the mighty army of Xerxes! Their hope, he said, is one day to renew that war and visit retribution on the little European country that defied them and lowered their prestige throughout the world. But they fear your navy."

"They may well fear it," he said proudly. "The greatest navy the world has ever known. It would defeat more than Persia."

"That they know, and dare not venture. But throughout the ten years of war with Sparta they hoped daily to hear that your navy had been destroyed; for Corcyra and Corinth, too, have navies, and you might well have destroyed one another. If word had come of any such disaster they would have invaded Hellas again—and conquered it."

"Very likely. But the navy is stronger than ever and fate has been kind. What do they propose to do

now ? You say the Satrap gave you no instructions. What did he wish you to infer ? ”

“ His hints were vague but I speculated much on them—until in my new interests they faded from my mind. But yesterday I received a letter from—not from him, but from a great person in Susa.”

“ Yes ? Yes ? ”

“ They were thoroughly disconcerted when your war ended and a peace was declared that was to last for fifty years. . . . In that letter I received orders from the Great King himself. He would have the war renewed. He has heard of my friendship with you—whether he has spies here—whether Setamon and Hippareté—I know not. But he *has* heard, and I have received definite orders——”

She spoke more rapidly now and drew herself up angrily.

“ Definite orders ! I, Tiy, a daughter of the Pharaohs ! From a Persian upstart ! Orders to use all my influence with you to that end. Your susceptibility to women is well known. Your—pardon me—vanity. Your love of glory and power.”

She paused a moment, but as Alcibiades only continued to stare at her, went on.

“ And not only am I to seduce you, to implant the idea that you may yet be Tyrant of all Hellas, so that you will involve Athens in one war after another until the whole country is exhausted, but if necessary enormous sums will be placed at my disposal to bribe the seamen to scuttle the ships——”

Alcibiades threw back his head and burst into a roar of laughter that was almost boyish.

“ By Zeus ! ” he cried when he could get his breath. “ I never before gauged the sinuosities of the Oriental mind ! Slow and secret, patient, resourceful—gods, yes !—and what a master-hand for plot ! So that is what they are up to ? ”

His eyes danced. “ And have they never heard,

Tiy, that I am notoriously fickle ? I fancy you have made an impression quite as feminine as intellectual on that Satrap, and he wrote confidently to his king that you could hold me until I was bound hand and foot, and Hellas safely delivered to Persia. Is he in love with you, Tiy ? ”

He saw the red spot appear on her high cheek bones, but she replied calmly : “ Yes, he is in love with me. And you have been rather faithful to Nemea.”

“ Rather is the right word. She pleases me at times. . . . It is quite possible that if you—but that is neither here nor there. I am deeply grateful to you for telling me this, Tiy. Nor need you suffer for refusing to betray your friend to the country that conquered your own. Write them you will obey their orders. They will believe you, for war and more war is coming. Give them to understand that in that beautiful head of yours was born the Epidaurian plot. That you worked on my vanity until you induced me to make that ‘ royal progress ’ through the Peloponnesus—in order to rouse the slow fury of Sparta. Tell them you seduced some one else and sent him with messages to Agis revealing my purpose. It will not hurt me, it will be of vast benefit to you, and we shall both enjoy the comedy.”

The stern gravity of her face had relaxed and she was smiling into his laughing eyes. “ Persia ! She will never outplot Alcibiades ! ” She drew a deep sigh of relief. “ Yes, I shall do as you suggest. I do not wish my properties confiscated, and it pleases me to outwit men who presume to dictate to Tiy. . . . I thought my mind worked quickly,” she added with a faint accent of pique, “ but yours travels like lightning.”

“ Shall I be modest for once and reply that the Athenian mind is famous for speed and agility ? But you were in no condition to counter. I can imagine the anger and consternation into which your

mind was thrown upon receiving those orders. And I was away and an answer must go to Susa at once. Write them now and tell them that Alcibiades is not only your slave but bent upon the kingship of all Hellas—and that no gold will be needed to sink the ships! That I am madly in love with you but you will grant me no favour until I can make you Queen of Hellas. Oh, it is a gorgeous counterplot, and it almost puts me in the humour to accomplish it!"

"Well, you have something of the sort in the secret recesses of your mind, have you not?" Her long black eyes that gleamed like jewels in the dark were regarding him fixedly.

He shrugged. "I don't think I have gone quite as far as that, for although there are moments when my ambitions may soar to Olympus I am also blessed with a measure of the Greek common sense. But conquer the Peloponnesus and Bœotia I shall. And give Corinth a lesson . . ." He paused musingly.

"And then you will go out and conquer richer states. I have sometimes thought you had your eye on Carthage and Syracuse."

He stretched out his long legs and clasped his hands behind his head. "Oh, yes, I should like to conquer both those states. To be the head of an Empire such as even the Asiatic world has never seen—for that would be but a beginning. And why not? With the rest of Hellas behind me what could I not accomplish?"

"And you either Tyrant or King? Even to me you have never confessed as much—but I think I know Alcibiades."

"Well, well, Tiy, why not?" He smiled at her teasingly. "Should I not have been proclaimed one or the other before I—let us say—sailed from Syracuse to Carthage?"

Her eyes kindled. She could understand the magnitudinous ambition, the horizonless vision, and she was not deceived by his bantering tone. "And

no name more immortal in history! The greatest boon your gods can bestow. Is not that the religion of every Greek? Would not any Olympian victor die without regret after he had seen his name engraved on stone?"

"Yes, yes! But I am in no hurry for immortality, for that comes when a man has passed out of life into history. I would live long and live every minute, and give no thought to that remote future—save, to be sure, with the eyes of the statesman."

He changed his tone and spoke gaily once more. "And when I am King, will you be my Queen Tiy? What a consort! You shall reign with me and give me the benefit of your wisdom always."

"And you, when not on the throne with me, will be diverting yourself with the Nemeas. But that is the fate of queens. Yes, Alcibiades, I humbly accept your offer, and now you will please go, as I am tired after a sleepless night and two days of brooding. And I must rise early and write to Persia. The messenger came by a devious route on a trading-ship, and the captain sails to-morrow afternoon."

He rose and stood over her. "It is useless for me to try to express my gratitude," he said, and she saw by the softened brilliancy of his eyes that he was really moved. "Not only because you have given me timely warning against Persia, but this new proof of your friendship . . . the greatest and most wonderful of friends . . . I feel almost humble . . ."

She stood up and gave him a light tap on the shoulder. "And what of Tiy whose pride it is that she has won the friendship and confidence of Alcibiades? But be on your guard. There are enemies nearer than Persia —and Alcibiades may not be the least of them."

She moved away more swiftly than her wont and before he could answer she had disappeared and closed a door behind her.

VII

ALCIBIADES was in high good humour as he rode through the dark moonless night, keeping to the road up the valley to avoid the quarry and the many little temples. He was elated with the idea of making a fool of a great nation like Persia, and perhaps even more that he had won the complete allegiance of this Egyptian who never before in the twenty-four proud years of her life had conceded aught to a man. And for him she would have courted exile, her great properties confiscated.

Or would she, if he had not arrived opportunely? Once more he felt she was still something of a mystery. It was possible that her own clear scheming mind would have led her to the same exit from her dilemma . . . but if not?

Why had she come to Athens? "Of my own will" was ambiguous enough. And why had she remained so long? Why had she given him this unbounded friendship? Could it be . . . could it be that she loved him?

He pondered this question for a time and then dismissed it. He exerted as powerful a charm over men as over women, and she was in mind and habit of thought more man than woman. She was no more devoted to his interests than Critias, Axiochus—a hundred others. And there was the absence of jealousy, and the flattery of being the only woman in the confidence of an Athenian.

Life in Egypt must be dull enough. She had found life of supreme interest in Athens. To meet daily its foremost men, to plot with the best minds against those of hardly less resource. To feel that she had perhaps a hand in shaping the destiny of a City State whose like existed nowhere on earth.

It was enough. He smiled as his vanity turned from the obvious solution. Athens may have worked

certain changes in her, but had stopped short of complete feminization. She no longer looked upon all men as Setamons. She had thawed and thawed until she had quite forgotten that these new friends of hers belonged to the despised sex, and regarded them as equals. But she still disdained to learn the arts of her own sex, although two men, possibly more, had fallen in love with her.

One of her most notable transformations was that she no longer pitched her voice somewhere down among her lower ribs, and while it could not be called soft and feminine, it was but deep and rich enough to be agreeable. . . . And it had taken her but the span of two banquets to conclude that never would she find anything more interesting than the friendship of those men she had begun by antagonizing. . . . And if she had aimed for the friendship of Alcibiades above all others, what more natural? Was he not the first man of Athens? The man whose favours, save only his enemies, all men sought? Great herself, she would be content with nothing less.

And then he entered the city and forgot her. He must find a banquet somewhere and revel.

The houses of several of his friends were dark, but Critias was entertaining in that of Rhodippe. They greeted him with shouts of welcome and surprise, for after a bath and change of raiment in the house of Callias he had gone from Piræus to Phaleron, and no word had come to the city of his return.

Nemea disposed herself even more gracefully on her couch, and by lowering her lids filled her eyes with languor. He pulled her ear amiably, caught a wreath flung him by Critias, then threw himself on a couch near the host and drank a goblet of wine.

"No politics!" he cried. "No politics! I would forget these last futile days and remember only that I am in Athens once more."

Critias arose and poured another libation. "To

Alcibiades who is with us again! Another cause for thanksgiving to the gods."

"Evoë! Evoë!" they shouted. "We will not even ask for your adventures. Forget that you have aught to think of but revel and pleasure."

An agreeable prescription for Alcibiades. They sang and drank deeply and the flute girls danced. An impecunious jester, remotely of their class, wandered in and paid for his wine by telling droll stories on the eminent, and responding with impertinent quips to the sallies of the more fortunate guests. Later, a young man, very lithe, whose every muscle seemed in action as he moved, ran in and immediately began a series of astonishing acrobatic contortions. And after that he leaped high in the air, whirling as he descended; danced with marvellous grace.

When he had finished and saluted his employer, Critias asked him severely as he threw him a bag of coins, "And why are you late? I expected you long since."

"I was engaged first at the house of Anytus," said the young man without humility, for he, too, was a citizen of Athens. "He would not let me go."

"Anytus!" exclaimed Alcibiades. "He also is giving a banquet to-night. I had forgotten."

"He is, O Alcibiades. And if Socrates had not said it was time for sensible men to talk and not look on at vain antics, I should not have been dismissed."

Alcibiades had eaten little that day. He had drunk several goblets of wine and was feeling its potency. He too was tired of vain antics and was abruptly inspired with a desire to indulge in one of his own coinage.

"Come! Come!" he cried, getting to his feet. "Let us to the house of Anytus and break up that learned symposium. Socrates has been lecturing me of late, and he called you a pig, Critias, to your face. You swore vengeance, and we'll both take it to-night,

for there is nothing he hates more than to be interrupted when he is bombarding the air with dialectics."

These men were always ready for anything new. Garlanded, staggering, shouting, singing, followed by their torch-bearers, they rioted up one street and down another, cursed by virtuous citizens and meeting one or two late wayfarers who recognized them. Finally they stormed into the house of Anytus, who was entertaining a more decorous company.

Although far from pleased at the unceremonious invasion of these revellers, he nodded hospitably.

"Greetings, Alcibiades," he said. "I learned only a short time since that you had been seen in the town, or I should have asked you to my banquet. I will send for more couches."

"Don't think of it! Don't think of it!" Alcibiades waved his hand graciously. "We have reclined long enough. We came only to make sure that Socrates was not boring you, and take him away if necessary —— Aha! Aha! Aha!"

Anytus had an unusual number of large silver pieces, seldom used, and displayed on a row of Milesian chests. Alcibiades gave a shout of delight and swooped upon the treasure.

"A wedding present for our good Doctor Eryximachus who marries six days hence!" he cried. "This will save me a dive into the Master's Chest."

And to the horror of Anytus and his guests, and the approving shouts of his ribald friends, he slung a fine piece under either arm and lifted his mantle to accommodate seven more.

Cristobulus, Pausanias, Cleinias, one or two others, started to rise, but Anytus motioned them to hold their peace. Interference might cause a turmoil whose consequences no man could foresee.

"Thanks, dear Anytus, thanks!" Alcibiades turned at the door. His eyes sparkled with delight, his garlanded head was tilted with laughing defiance.

A young Dionysus, thought the company gloomily, and handsomer than ever.

"Always the most generous of men," continued Alcibiades warmly. "To-morrow I shall return for the rest. I regret I cannot carry more, but my friends are too drunk to trust with anything so precious."

And on comparatively steady feet, although blue sparks were snapping in his head, he went forth to make more noise.

"Abominable!" exclaimed Pausanias. And Outrageous, Disgraceful, Villainous, Deplorable, were a few of the consolatory adjectives launched at the host.

Anytus shrugged. "Think how much worse it could have been. He might have taken all, and now he has left me almost half."

"He will return them to-morrow," said Socrates confidently. "I feel sure of that."

But Cleinias spoke bitterly. "Yes, if he remembers where he got them! What will he do next? A fine performance for the head of the State!"

A few days later Alcibiades did remember his escapade and the plate travelled back. But the story was all over Athens before that, and his enemies made the most of it. A fine performance for the head of the State, unconsciously echoing Cleinias. And do not men tell the truth when drunk? He had stolen that silver because he had no money left for a wedding gift, and Anytus, a member of his club, had lied rather than have him suspected of worse. What would he do next?

VIII

ATHENS, however, found little to worry her until autumn, when she was thrown into agitation not from within but without. Three hundred Lacedæmonian hoplites were landed at Epidaurus under the very

nose of Ægina. There was a naval station on the western coast of the island, but the troop-ships had crept up the gulf in the night and the garrison were none the wiser.

Argos immediately sent an angry remonstrance. Owing to the naval supremacy of Athens the sea was a part of her territory, and it was a direct violation of the Treaty that she had suffered the passage of enemy troops.

The Athenians had made one concession to Sparta on the ever live question of Pylos. She had removed from that island the Messenians and Helots, enemies of Sparta and fugitives from her stern retribution, who had been left in charge after the great episode of Sphakteria, and replaced them by an Athenian garrison. The Argives now demanded that the foes of Sparta should be restored and permitted to ravage Laconia.

There was agitation in the Ecclesia, for Athens was still nominally at peace with Sparta. Nicias followed the envoy with a speech denouncing the proposal, as was to be expected.

Alcibiades, who had held a long consultation with the envoy before he went to the Council, had his arguments prepared and when his name was called mounted the Bema. The garrison on Ægina had been culpably negligent, he informed the Athenians. It was unheard of that troop-ships should pass a fort undetected at any hour, for sentinels were supposed to pace the walls by night as by day. But the thing had happened, and the Athenians should agree to the compensation demanded. The Argives were their allies; they had been deeply embarrassed, for they had been on the point of storming Epidaurus after reducing the city to the verge of starvation. It was not only just but wise that their demand be granted, for Sparta should be rebuked for the trick she had played on Athens. The terms of the treaty between Argos, Mantinea, Elis, and Athens were well known:

without the consent of all no other state should be permitted to march its troops through the territory of any one of the four.

He then dwelt eloquently upon the incalculable benefit of the Epidaurian conquest by Argos, and warned them emphatically against doing anything to imperil a treaty with a state whose friendship was so necessary to Athens. The vote was taken, and once more it was found that his arguments had prevailed with the Athenians.

But the fear of Spartan vengeance hung heavily over the city.

As the months passed and Sparta remained as quiet as if buried under one of her own earthquakes, save to repulse the Messanians and Helots, the feeling of uneasiness grew ; her sloth was proverbial, but when she did make up her mind to strike it was ever with a deadly force. The clubs of Nicias, Hyperbolus, Phæax, Euphiletus, took full advantage of this apprehension, and the time came when Alcibiades was not greeted with smiles as he walked abroad, nor with cheers in the Ecclesia.

"I shall not be a Strategos this coming year," he said to the members of his club, who met at his house on the eve of the spring elections. "We may all make up our minds to that. It has not been worth while to make any effort to countervail the industry of the Oligarchs and extreme Democrats, for a reaction was bound to come. They loved me too well ! They must hate me for a time and regain a proper equilibrium. But their hatred will expire as soon as they have elected some one in my place, and they will begin to feel sorry for me—and themselves. They will realize, too, that I counselled them in all sincerity, and whatever I ask for they will give me. Next year they will re-elect me."

"I believe you are right," said Critias. "But I hate to see the enemy victorious—crowing over us !—even for a moment. And a year is a long time."

"Who knows what may happen during that year," said Axiochus gloomily.

"Anything or nothing," replied Alcibiades, dipping his cup. "But be sure I shall be on the alert every moment."

"Well, for Zeus' sake," exclaimed Callias, "behave yourself until this time next year. Riot no more through the streets. Steal no more silver. Have no more pictures painted with harlots. Insult no more men publicly because you deem them unworthy of addressing you. The Athenians are being taught to fear that assumption of yours that you are above all laws. The word 'Tyrant' is always flying out of the mouth of Hyperbolus——"

"Hyperbolus!" Alcibiades laughed. "Wait until these elections are over! The Athenians, having punished me once, will be in no mood to consider my exile. That is one reason I am resigned to a brief retirement to private life: there could be no better time for an ostrakismos."

IX

Nevertheless, and in spite of the clear processes of his mind, he was deeply chagrined when his prediction was fulfilled and he was reduced to the status of a private citizen.

"It is one thing to be prepared and another to have reality flung in one's face," he said gloomily to Tiy when the news of his defeat was brought to her house. "And Nicias re-elected, of course! A peace-loving old imbecile like that is the one to please the Athenians in their present mood. He will ruin Athens yet."

Tiy pulled the ears of a handsome black cat sitting on her lap until it arched its back angrily and sprang to the floor. "I wish your Athenians were not so vacillating," she said. "They swing back and forth

and seem to have no definite purpose. Why were they more stable under Pericles ? ”

“ The conditions were different. He had a long era of peace in which to train them. Ten years of war and low demagogues demoralized them. To-day they want to be a great Empire once more, and to-morrow think of naught but peace. Were it not for Nicias we should have peace until they were again ready for war—and conquest. Nicias is my evil genius, and one day the Athenians will learn he is theirs. No man of negative purpose should ever be the head of a state. If I were all my enemies represent, the State would be safer in my hands than in his.”

He sprang to his feet and walked up and down the room. “ If they would only give me a free hand ! ” he cried. “ If a Strategos only remained in office for ten years instead of one ! What might I not accomplish were I given definite power for a long term of years ! It is a bad policy to make a man crowd all he can into twelve short months, for mistakes are inevitable.”

“ Those are Oligarchical sentiments,” said Tiy, smiling. “ The Demos permits no man to grow too powerful. I have often wondered how you endure to belong to that party.”

“ I have little respect for either, but the Demos is strong and the other weak. In many ways, I admit, Athens owes her strength and her greatness to democracy, for the Oligarchs would have made of us a present to Sparta long since. But when Pericles was practically Tyrant he should have used his power over the Demos to win their consent to a longer term of office.”

Tiy had been regarding him sympathetically, but her eyes suddenly flashed with anger. “ After all,” she said, “ a year was long enough to provide your enemies with material for defeat, and the gods know

you handed it to them liberally. You have been wilder then ever this past winter."

"I have been bored. I thought the Argives would have reduced Epidaurus long before this, and Agis would find his cursed omens favourable. Or if I had been assured of two more years of peace and power I should have turned my attention to something else, perhaps taken the fleet to Amphipolis, for to that they would hardly object. But youth is strong within me, and I amused myself as best I could."

"You need not have had yourself painted with Nemea—in I know not what fashion, for men only are permitted to pay two obols to look at that picture. What possessed you to do such a thing?"

"I did it for a wager when the wine was in my head. I wish I had not, although it is not as bad as you think. But they have made the most of it."

"They have indeed, and rightly! No other man has ever dared do such a thing. And it is easy for your enemies to persuade the Athenians that it was an act fit only for despots. That you know no law but your own will and are a danger to the State. . . . But it is something to hear you admit you have made a mistake!"

"I do not mind admitting it when I have made a mistake," he said arrogantly and tossing his head. "And what other mistakes have I made?"

"None as a statesman perhaps, but I believe that if you had behaved like a dignified and responsible citizen, who was also a Strategos and head of the State, after your return from Epidaurus last year, you would have defeated your enemies in spite of all this talk about your desire for war."

He manœuvred himself gingerly round the stalking cat, although he would have liked to take that sacrosanct prowler by the back of its neck and fling it out of the window. "Possible. Possible," he said. "But I have Olympian fires pent up inside me and should lead

a constant life of action. If they have no legitimate outlet they burst forth as best they can."

She made an exclamation of impatience. "For what then is mind given us," she demanded angrily, "but to restrain impulses that involve the weak and the foolish in ruin? One would think you were an irresponsible boy, instead of a man past thirty with transcendent gifts and a mind that can work with the far-sighted logic of a man of middle-age long versed in statecraft. You were not spanked often enough as a boy."

He laughed, and his ill-humour fled. "You talk like Socrates," he said. "And like him you make me feel repentant. But, alas, the repentance never endures."

"I wish you to promise me one thing," she said with energy. "If you do not I shall brave the wrath of Persia and spend a year in Carthage."

"Oh—oh—what—I will promise anything! What is it?"

"That you will behave yourself from now until the next election—I mean the next election of Strategoi. I leave you no chance for quibbling."

"I promise, Tiy, I promise—but on one condition. Send all these cursed cats back to Egypt. They are always under my feet, and I am constantly haunted by the fear I shall come here some day and find you with no eyebrows."

"Cats must be spoken of with respect," she said severely. "They are sacred to Bast, the goddess of Bubastis, and the male is a form of the sun-god." Then she laughed merrily as she saw his look of disgust. "I will keep them on the roof, and I promise I will not shave my eyebrows. After all, I am not in Egypt. But I have your promise, Alcibiades?"

"Yes, you have it. I'll be as good as young Pericles for a whole year—that is to say, I shall observe much discretion. I have much to think of this coming year!

My energies may find a proper outlet. How will Persia take my downfall ? ”

“ I shall represent that in no other way could your ostracism be prevented, and it was better you should be out of power for one year than banished for ten. Fortunately the Asiatic has an infinite patience.”

Alcibiades shrugged. “ Would I had a little of it ! I have great and glorious plans for the future, and time moves so slowly, and for a whole year I may not lead armies to war.”

“ Would that Alcibiades was Zeus ! But go now and show the Athenians a dignified mien, and if you must amuse yourself to-night do so in your own house and admit none but those you have reason to trust. I shall write my letter to Persia.”

X

As the date for the ostrakismos approached the followers of Nicias became seriously alarmed. In spite of the fact that the Athenians had re-elected him because to no one else could they look for the preservation of the peace, he was not personally popular, and of this Hyperbolus made the most.

He was intensely aristocratic and reserved, rarely leaving his house and as inaccessible there as in a fortress. Alcibiades might be haughty and arrogant, might box the ears of a schoolmaster because he had no copy of Homer in his possession, or snub men whom he regarded as negligible—one day ; but on the next he would be charming to every one he met, and perhaps ask pardon for his rudeness, always with the most ingenious excuses. But Nicias was never gay or charming. He had a gloomy mien. He suffered from an affection of the kidneys that made his walk feeble and his voice devoid of resonance. He had not entertained even his friends since the loss of his health, and no man got beyond his porter with a

petition. His only concessions to popularity were handsome contributions to the liturgies and the distribution of largesse among the poor.

But although a second-rate statesman he had three things in his favour. He had shown in times past ability as a General. He had a firm and consistent peace policy, however dubious his methods of pursuing it. He was a dignified citizen of stern moral principles. For these three reasons he had been re-elected many times.

Nevertheless public sentiment was turning against him under the industrious fostering of Hyperbolus, for after all he was a poor figure-head for a great state; the leader of the extreme democrats interviewed practically every member of the Demos and enumerated the imperfections of this cold aristocrat they had thoughtlessly re-elected. He believed that with the reins in his own hands he could easily dispose of Alcibiades. Give the Demos another taste of its own power under one of themselves—bent also on preserving the peace—and they would have no more of the Eupatridæ.

Critias had no real belief, now that the Athenians had punished their favourite, that the ostrakismos could be turned against him, but not only was it well to take no chances, the prospect of Hyperbolus in power was enough to make any decent man court exile for himself. When he was convinced that the clubs favourable to Nicias were on the border of panic he approached Phæax with the suggestion that the two factions unite and rid Athens of Hyperbolus once for all.

Phæax swallowed his pride. The solution was one he never could have hoped for, and he promised to put the question at once to his club and others.

Androcles made furious protest. It had been his idea that the vote should be turned against Alcibiades, and he had exulted in the thought of his exile. But he was overruled. The case was desperate, and Nicias in far more danger than Alcibiades.

There was no time to be lost, and the two factions worked together like brothers who had patched up a family row for the sake of a menaced inheritance. They talked to the Athenians by night and by day, in public and private, and lean pouches swelled. They visited Salamis, Ægina, the farms. They climbed the mountains to hold earnest conversations with charcoal burners, goat-herds, and bee-masters. Nicias and Alcibiades held themselves haughtily aloof.

Hyperbolus redoubled his efforts, but his anger and dismay destroyed what balance he had ; he foamed and ranted, he shouted and wept. In short, he made himself ridiculous, and the Athenians never forgave a man who excited their derision. The ostrakismos took place and Hyperbolus was exiled for ten years while all Athens rocked with laughter.

And then things began to happen in the Peloponnesus. King Agis marched his army against Argos, and this time without unfavourable omens. He was joined by the Tegean and certain other Arcadian forces, while the more northern allies were directed to assemble at Philius on the northern confines of the Argolid. In spite of the alertness of the Argives, reinforced by the Mantineans and three thousand Elean hoplites, the King managed to elude their vigilance and reached Philius in safety.

The Argives and their allies, greatly outnumbered, sent to Athens demanding an army. But they met with no response. Nicias was determined to keep Athens out of war, Treaty or no Treaty.

Alcibiades held his peace. He had no intention of risking his waxing popularity by counselling war at this time, and much as he loved action he would leave Athens again only as a Strategos—or as ambassador at some crucial moment—not as a mere hoplite or cavalry officer.

He followed the progress of the troops in the Peloponnesus with alert interest, and runners were constantly

bringing in the news. For a time the situation of the Argives, the Mantineans, and the Eleans seemed desperate. Agis was a General of long experience, and he manœuvred until he had covered his enemy on front, flank, and rear. A great battle was expected. It might be long-drawn out, for the Argives and their allies were strong enough to prevent an easy victory, and as brave as any.

And then came an astonishing piece of news. Agis had marched home.

A second runner brought the story. Thrasyllus, the Argive General, had gone to the tent of the King and asked him to forgo a battle. He feared the destruction of his inferior army, and promised that if the Spartans and their allies would withdraw, the Argives would be glad to consider all reasonable demands and conclude an honourable truce. Whether Agis had sacrificed or not was unknown, but certain it was that he had marched off at the head of his reluctant cursing army immediately after the interview in the tent.

Alcibiades acted at once. He forced his way into the house of Nicias, who was sunning himself by the altar in the court.

"Now is your chance," he said, ignoring formalities and the hostile stare of his unwilling host. "March at once to Argos with an imposing army. Give any excuse for your delay. If you can think of none, leave it to me. You will save the Treaty and be involved in no fighting. Remember that Argos is our ally and we may need her in the future. You may disapprove of that Treaty, but it exists, and the honour of Athens is at stake." Alcibiades could be very emphatic. "That honour is in your hands and if you sacrifice it the Athenians will turn against you—particularly when it is considered you had this chance to redeem it."

"But I am ill," grumbled Nicias. "I have a con-

stant ache in the small of my back, and am in no condition to travel. Euryximachus gives me no relief. What are doctors good for ? "

But it was plain that he had been impressed, and Alcibiades, who had counted on his refusal to go in person, replied earnestly: "Then send Lachês and Nicostratus. They are good enough Generals, although no generalship will be needed. I wish to go as ambassador."

"Ah ?" Nicias forgot his back and sat up. "And wherefore ? Why should Athens send an ambassador to the Argives ? "

Alcibiades had no intention of revealing his true reason but replied promptly: "Because a persuasive tongue will be needed to convince the Argives that our tardiness was not deliberate, and neither Nicostratus nor Lachês has the gift of words."

"You mean that Alcibiades is a good liar and they are not ! " Nicias smiled for the first time, and combed his straggling grey beard with his fingers, a token with him of the melting mood. "Well, I think you are right. That Treaty should never have been made, for it was a direct challenge to Sparta, but it exists and the honour of Athens must be saved. I shall call an Ecclesia for to-morrow, but I cannot appear. I can hardly walk. Lachês must speak for me—— "

"Why not permit me to speak for you ? Lachês is no orator, and the Athenians will need persuasion. If it is known that I speak with your authority I shall be doubly convincing."

Nicias regarded him dubiously. But although he disliked this young rival and put no faith in him whatever, he did not make the mistake of underrating his abilities. And he was an extremely conscientious man. Determined upon peace as he was, this was not the first time since the outbreak in the Peloponnesus that he had weighed the honour of the Athenians against his reluctance to lead them even to the fringe

of war. But there was a truce for the present between Sparta and Argos, and he foresaw no harm that Alcibiades could accomplish, while he might be of service in placating the Argives. He made up his mind to emerge by the loophole so opportunely presented.

"Very well," he said ungraciously. "Have it your own way."

XI

THE great Argive plain was dry and dead in the heat of summer and its crops had been trampled by marching hosts. The sun was declining as the Athenian army of one thousand hoplites and three hundred horsemen left the Port of Argos and began their march toward the city. The violet light faded from the valley, the encircling mountains turned grey under the darkening sky. The ruins of Tiryns and the Temple of Hera, the red roofs of Argos, seven miles away, were mere blurs in the landscape; Mycenæ, at the northern end of the plain, but a part of the dark wall behind her.

Not a light showed anywhere. The quiet was intense and oppressive. They might have been on some fragment of a dead planet had it not been for the chirping of the cicada. The little army welcomed the familiar sound, for not only did they love the cicada whose tiny music was amongst the earliest of their childhood memories, and the theme of so many poets, but like all Greeks they hated solitude and silence.

The gates of Argos would be closed at this hour, and as their reception was doubtful Lachês ordered the tents to be pitched a mile from the city.

Alcibiades was in no mood for sleep, and he walked out alone on the plain, meditating on the information he had received in Nauplia.

Thrasyllus had been stoned upon his return for "throwing away a certain victory," and forced to take refuge at the altar in the Agora. He had then been

court-martialled by the soldiers, driven out, and his property confiscated.

But in spite of their disappointment and indignation the Argive authorities were determined to adhere to the truce between the disgraced General and the King of Sparta.

Barrier first to be demolished, for Alcibiades had come to Argos with the definite intention of renewing the war. His second object was to ascertain the temper of the "Chosen Thousand," and direct it if possible.

Immediately after the Peace of Nicias, when Argos began to intrigue for her old proud position in the Peloponnesus, she had formed a regiment of one thousand hoplites, young men of wealth and position, to receive constant military training, and live a life apart from the ordinary citizen. An astonishing experiment for any democratic government that disbanded its troops as soon as war was over, and a dangerous one. It was doubly so in this case, for all the young men were of the proudest aristocracy, and Oligarchs both by temperament and birth, however necessity might compel them to defer to the majority.

Alcibiades knew the greater number of these young men, several of them relatives. He could rely upon them in one respect but apprehended trouble in another. They would enter enthusiastically into his plan for renewing the war, furious as they were at being marched home when they had anticipated a great and glorious victory. No wonder they had stoned Thrasyllus. On the other hand, he knew their ambition to overthrow the Demos, that they were only waiting until the headship of Argos in the Peloponnesus should be established. He had talked with them constantly during the fortnight they had spent together in the Epidaurian territory, but although he had listened as sympathetically as could be expected of a Strategos elected by the Demos of his own State, he had given them no encouragement. Sparta was oligarchical,

and oligarchical states had a pronounced affinity for one another.

If things went wrong with Argos the Chosen Thousand would seize the opportunity, no doubt of that.

He had no belief in the endurance of the truce, for he had also heard at Nauplia that Agis, king though he was, had been severely reprimanded for turning *his* back upon certain victory, and threatened with a heavy fine. He would be anxious to redeem himself.

A thousand hoplites and three hundred cavalry was a small force to bring to Argos with the purpose he had in mind, but Nicias had refused to countenance a larger, and Alcibiades dared not press the matter at the moment. He had no desire to rouse suspicions of his ulterior motives in going as an ambassador of good-will to the Peloponnesus. And at least he had accomplished the feat of withdrawing himself far from the anxious eye of Nicias.

But if Argos was to remain the ally of Athens—and she was an ally of untold value—she must break that truce with Sparta and be preserved from oligarchial menace. He knew that Lachês and Nicostratus would welcome an engagement as eagerly as himself, for they resented the ascendancy of Nicias and would hail any opportunity to distinguish themselves.

The stars were out and the moon was rising. His walk had brought him to the ruins of the old palace of Tiryns. Alcibiades, like most Greeks, was both practical and imaginative, and, tired of scheming, he gave his fancy play. As far as any man knew, the Cretans, when they invaded Hellas more than a thousand years ago, had built this mighty fortress, almost as huge as their own Knossus, and those kings had reigned for generations in unparalleled luxury and tyranny. Superb men and beautiful women had wandered through those great halls—lived and loved, fought and died. Lived and loved, fought and died. The destiny of mankind !

There had been close communion between Crete and Egypt in those days. This palace must have existed during the reign of Akhnaton, and he wondered if an Egyptian princess had come here to Tiryns as the bride of one of its kings—perhaps a daughter of that great Queen Tiy, who had borne such a futile son ; Alcibiades had only contempt for a king who hated war and would have welded the nations through brotherly love and worship of one god.

He ceased to see the bats flying about those long-deserted halls, the stars shining through the broken arches. It was a frowning palace again, but only without. Inside all was light and revelry, and on a throne of state sat a woman with long oval enigmatic eyes and immobile face under an enormous gold head-dress. He had once seen a statuette of a woman whose type had lived in ancient Crete. The body was exposed in front to the pinched waist, but the dress was full and flounced, puffed at the shoulders and out behind in a singularly ugly fashion, deforming a figure whose lines should have been flowing, and revealed in all their female loveliness. He could not imagine even an ancient Tiy in such a ridiculous costume, and he conjured up a queen, slender, not so tall, and wearing the Pharaohic garment in which her descendant had first revealed herself to Athenian eyes, copied, she had told him, from old paintings on tombs. The face was as ivory, as jewelled, but feminine and seductive—all that Tiy should have been and was not.

He was swept by a sudden gust of passion. How he could have loved that Egyptian if fate had not developed her into the powerful dominating creature she was ! Loved her without ceasing, perhaps. . . . A singular reflection for him to make, he thought angrily—but who knew ? No life had ever been more fortunate than his, and it had never occurred to him that he had missed anything. But he recalled that

other men—a few at least—loved one woman consumedly and asked nothing more of the gods.

If Tiy . . . his demand for her companionship knew no cessation. When in Athens he sought her daily. He could not imagine life without her. He had a sudden vision of the perfect union . . . happiness . . . content . . . a taste of Olympian immortality while yet in life. . . .

He cast her out of his mind angrily, cursing all women's states.

Tiryns was a ruin once more. Owls were hooting, bats flying. The arches were thick with cobwebs. Were it daylight he could see the black stains of fire on the cyclopean stones. The Dorians had overrun it when they invaded the Peloponnesus, the gods only knew when and whence. Or when those that settled in this valley had called themselves Argives. They had killed the king and all his people, although the palace was not destroyed until many hundred years later. Knossus must have fallen about the same time and could send no aid.

And less than a thousand years ago the beacon had flashed from Troy to the mountain above Argos. From height to height, from Mount Ida to Lemnos, to Athos, thence to Eubœa and down the coast of Hellas through Thessaly and Bœotia to "Kithairon's height," across the Saronic Gulf and the Argolid to Larissa, until Clytemnestra, standing on the walls of Mycenæ, knew that Troy had fallen.

Agamemnon, with what was left of his thousand ships, had sailed into that bay, perhaps down that broad pathway the same old moon was casting on the waters; driven in his chariot of state up this valley—to his death by an adulterous wife and her paramour. The conqueror returning in triumph after ten years of warfare to the comfort and security of his home! And Cassandra standing beside him.

Alcibiades yawned. Well, Agamemnon was not the

first to be great in war and a fool about women. Tiy's remark, no doubt, if she had been with him to-night and mooning like himself before the palace of a possible ancestress. It was time for bed. He must be at his best in the morning. Thank the gods he never dreamed and slept like an infant in its basket.

XII

The Athenians were admitted to the city but greeted with sour and scowling faces. Lachês and Nicostratus went before the Council and made an ingenious apology (concocted by Alcibiades) for the tardy relief of Athens. Nicias had been very ill, and the Ecclesia had only awaited his recovery—expected daily—out of the respect in which they held him. Finally, four days—it must have been—before the abrupt termination of the war, he had recovered sufficiently to ask the Ecclesia through Alcibiades to send troops to the aid of these esteemed allies of Athens. They had sailed at once, but they had been delayed by a storm at sea, and were deeply disappointed to learn upon arriving at Nauplia that there was no immediate engagement in which they could take part. But of course the war would be renewed immediately.

No, the Generals were informed, it would not. A truce was a truce. They had promised to come to an agreement with Sparta, or at all events to parley to that end, and the promise would be kept. As for Alcibiades, ambassador or no ambassador, they had no intention of receiving him, nor of permitting that firebrand to address the people.

In short the Athenians were invited to leave the city and return to their ships.

Alcibiades meanwhile had not been idle. He had very little doubt as to the reception of the Generals, and the Council's attitude—inspired by fear—of him-

self. He spent a part of that hour with the Chosen Thousand, and the officers of the Mantineans and the Eleans; before Lachês and Nicostratus had left the Council Chamber he had ascended the broad flight of steps that divided the theatre and mounted the platform at its highest point, there to await with folded arms and confident mien the citizens of Argos.

If he had been in the mood to draw inspiration from aught but his own teeming brain he would have found it, he reflected, in the lovely prospect before him. The dark blue bay sparkled and rippled in the sunlight, the citadel of Nauplia on its Acropolis above was as white as the foam breaking on the sands. A column of smoke rose in the still air beside the gorgeous columns of Hera's great temple where priests were sacrificing. If the earth was brown the cypresses and plane trees of the valley were a cool and sombre green, and beneath their shade the shepherds in their goat-skins piped to the flocks. There were watch towers on the mountains, other temples on the plain, and below him was the Agora, by no means as beautiful as that of Athens, but imposing with stately columned buildings, nevertheless.

And that market-place was seething. Before the magistrates knew what was happening, the citizens of Argos, including the disbanded soldiers, and the Mantineans and Eleans, were filling the theatre, their eyes on the splendid figure of Alcibiades with the sun shining on his bright curls. He wore the high metal greaves and short scarlet cape of the cavalry officer, and although he had removed his helmet he looked like a young god of war. The soldiers cheered him eagerly, for all knew that had he still been Strategos he would have marched into the Argolid long since; and Thrasyllus beset with no coward's doubts of the issue of a battle which by this time would have been decided in their favour.

He began his speech by giving eloquent expression

to their own anger and resentment, and when they had finished applauding informed them of his own impatience at the procrastination of Nicias, now in such high favour with the Athenians that they had delayed, although against their better judgment, until he should be well enough to send troops to their relief. The Argives found no difficulty in inferring they owed the final movement of the troops to this powerful friend of their State, who was determined to show his goodwill and the deep affection in which he held them.

And then he proceeded to reveal his purpose.

"Men of Argos," he said, his sonorous voice reaching every ear in that vast theatre, "that shameful truce is null and void, for it was made without the consent of all the allies, and therefore an infringement of the Treaty.

"If there was no excuse for Thrasyllus when he made that private agreement with Agis in a moment of panic, how much less has Argos to consider it binding when he did not even consult the other Generals? It was a pact between two leaders of opposing armies, not between two states at war. Will the Council pretend to deny that if such a proposition had been brought to the city and put to the vote of the people, here in this theatre, it would have been rejected with the contumely it deserved? Agis and Thrasyllus would have been sent back to the battlefield with their armies, and if the king had chosen to march home—a pastime of which he seems more fond than of war—it would have been with no truce to deliver to an angry Sparta.

"And not only would the Argives have consented to no interruption of the war at a moment so propitious to themselves [wild cheering], but as honourable men they never would have consummated a truce without the consent of Athens, Mantinea, and Elis. The Athenians were not here. Would your other allies have given their consent to that truce?"

He paused until the Mantineans and Eleans had made the mountains ring with their shouts of denial.

"Therefore, Men of Argos, repudiate that illegal truce. Resume war to-morrow. March against Orchomenus. Not only is that city of vital importance to you, close as it is to your ally Mantinea, but it contains hostages placed there by the Lacedæmonians who should be released. Its walls are in bad condition and it can easily be taken. If our victory rouses Sparta to action, so much the better. If not, at least you will have garrisoned a city close to the border of Arcadia. But I think we may have no doubt of the issue."

He spoke for half an hour. He rarely spoke longer, for it was his method to bring his orations to a close when his hearers were persuaded, but longing for more. In vain the hastily summoned Council protested. The soldiers of four states would not let them speak. The vote was taken and there were few pebbles cast against the immediate march to Orchomenus.

XIII

It was taken with little loss of life, and the city agreed to become an ally of Mantinea, furnish hostages as an evidence of good faith, and release those sent to her fortress by Sparta.

And then there was dissension in the ranks of the victors.

Another step must be taken and immediately, but what? The Elean Generals demanded that the entire army march against Lepreum, an important city near their own where Sparta had planted a military colony of three hundred freemen and seven hundred Helots —for what else but deliberate provocation?

But the Mantineans were determined to attack Tegea, in which there was a strong party favourable to their plans. They would not hear of delaying

this long-anticipated offensive, and the Athenians upheld them, for Tegea was of infinitely more importance to their own plans than a city far away on the Ionian coast. The Eleans yielded to a fit of temper and marched off with their three thousand hoplites, leaving a serious deficit in the army.

Mantinea and Tegea were situated on a lofty plain surrounded by mountains, the latter city just over the border from Lacedæmonia, and an ally of surpassing importance to Sparta. When the Tegeans saw the formidable army spread out over the plain they dispatched a runner to Sparta begging the king to move with extraordinary rapidity, for revolt was growing in the city and a civil war threatened in which the rebels might be victorious and open the gates to the enemy. A day later they sent another with the information that the allies were preparing to lay siege to the city and the disorder within was increasing hourly.

For once Sparta moved with alacrity. Agis begged to be given the opportunity to redeem his mistake, and the Spartans sent him forth at the head of his army, and dispatched messengers to the Corinthians, Bœotians, and other allies commanding their aid But Agis prayed his gods to grant him victory with no help from without.

The allies endeavoured to draw him into battle on a rugged spur of the mountain to which they had retreated, and would have succeeded but for the sarcastic remark of an old Spartan. Fearful of making a mistake, he ordered a retreat.

This was a blow to the allied Generals, for the soldiers clamoured to leave their advantageous position and follow. Remonstrances were unavailing. The Argives and Mantineans shouted they would denounce them for treason, would court-martial them as they had Thrasyllus; that if they held back they would elect other Generals and march after the retreating Lacedæmonians.

The Generals, seriously perturbed, hesitated as long as they dared. The Athenians counselled prudence. The Lacedæmonians had come to fight, and if not followed were bound to return. Once more the Generals exhorted the soldiers, but the menacing roar of those impatient men, disappointed once too often, terrified them and they gave orders on the following morning to march down to the plain, and disposed their army in battle array.

Agis and his army were nowhere to be seen, although his camp had been near the Temple of Hercules. He had gone to the border to turn the subterranean watercourse on Mantinea, but finding this impracticable, he turned back determined to give battle to the allies on their hill if he found it impossible to decoy them down to the plain.

When he emerged from a pass to find himself confronted by the enemy, deployed for battle, shields and spears glittering in the sun, rank upon rank, he was thrown into momentary consternation, and so were his troops. But the Spartan discipline was the best in the world. They poured through the pass and began to form rapidly.

Alcibiades, who was in command of the cavalry, galloped over to where the Generals were discussing the situation.

"For Zeus' sake!" he shouted, "take this advantage the gods have given you! Give them no time to form. Attack at once."

But the Generals would not listen. It was the Greek custom, observed by all but the Spartans, to exhort the troops before entering upon a battle. To screw up their courage by eloquent words, calling upon their love of country, of family, their self-interest, their horror of capture and slavery, love of glory. The troops expected it, and to-day the Generals conceived they would need it more than ever, in spite of their eagerness to fight, for the very word "Lacedæ-

monians" often struck terror to the hearts of soldiers who ventured against them. Precious time was lost while they galloped up and down the ranks dispensing words, and gratified by yells of ever-increasing vigour.

Alcibiades returned to his regiment cursing as even he had never cursed before.

"Gods on Olympus!" he cried to Lachês, interrupting that General's eloquence. "If I were in command of this army I'd lead my men in a charge that would scatter those Spartans, and every man on this side would follow me."

"That may be," said Lachês sourly, "but you are not, and I am too old to be reckless."

"Too old to lead an army in battle," replied Alcibiades furiously. "You are no better than Nicias."

The battle began, the Lacedæmonians singing war songs to the sound of many flutes. Every Greek hoplite in battle carried his shield on his left arm, and edged constantly to the right in order to protect his exposed side by the shield of his neighbour. The Spartans advanced with grave deliberation, their feet keeping time to the music. The allied soldiers, roused to a pitch of delirium by the exhortations of their Generals, rushed forward like maniacs.

As each army slanted to the right, following the shields, it was natural there should be outflanking at either end. Agis gave the signal to two of his regiments to make a flank movement and bring themselves opposite the Mantineans, who, at the extreme left, were rapidly acquiring an advantage. To fill the vacancy he sent word to two Generals who were on the extreme right of his line to move over. They chose to disobey him and Agis was obliged to countermand his first order. The Mantineans attacked the two regiments as they turned and cut them off from their centre. The Chosen Thousand dashed into the gap, took them on the right flank, routed and pursued them; the Mantineans followed up their advantage,

and the whole left wing of the Lacedæmonian army was thrown into disorder.

The Mantineans and the Thousand, instead of returning to the main body of the allied army, thought only of pursuit and meanwhile the centre and right of the Lacedæmonian forces were in conflict with the less disciplined troops of the Argives, those of two small dependent states, and the Athenians.

The engagement was furious and bloody but brief. The allies were outnumbered probably two to one, and their soldiers, terrified at the formidable precision and order, those unerring lance-thrusts, remembering that the Lacedæmonian hoplites were the first in the world, broke in panic and trampled one another in their mad desire to escape. Defeated in front, the allies were taken on flank by both Lacedæmonians and Tegeans. The Athenians would have been cut to pieces had not Alcibiades protected them with his cavalry. Lachês and Nicostratus had fallen and he had assumed command. His one thought was to effect a masterly retreat, and this he did, although exposed on flank and front.

The Mantineans and the Chosen Thousand, seeing the disorderly flight, had no disposition to renew the battle and also effected a retreat, although with severe losses to the former. They could have been followed and exterminated, but it was not the Spartan policy to give long pursuit to a defeated army.

So ended the Battle of Mantinea, of far-reaching importance in the history of Greece. Agis was vindicated and Sparta restored with a bound to her old proud position in the Peloponnesus.

Alcibiades was gloomy and disgusted, but he, too, was vindicated. If his advice had been taken the Spartan army would have been routed before it had time to throw a spear; there would have been no battle. And without his cavalry not an Athenian would have survived. As it was but two hundred had fallen, including the Generals.

XIV

The Lacedæmonians marched home to celebrate the feast of the Karneian Apollo. Alcibiades went to Argos to keep an eye on the Chosen Thousand.

That regiment had returned from Mantinea full of pride in itself and contempt for the main body of the army. Their losses had been insignificant, they had been victorious over the left wing of the enemy, and they had accomplished a dignified retreat instead of running like hares while the Spartan flutes were still playing.

The ordinary soldiers were disheartened and filled with hatred of their Generals. They prayed to their gods to deliver them from ever confronting the Lacedæmonians again, and were in a mood to listen to any counsels that relieved their minds of that dismal prospect. The time was ripe for change.

Alcibiades suspected the intentions of the young Oligarchs, for they treated him with distant courtesy and invited him no more to their mess. He saw his precious Treaty threatened, for he soon discovered they were in communication with Sparta ; but for once he was helpless. It was little satisfaction to tell the Council what he thought of them. He could not even rouse them to anger. They were utterly discouraged, and, forgetting their former disapproval, even that they owed this disaster primarily to none other, they clung to him and begged him not to leave them. He was opposed to the Oligarchs and the most brilliant representative of another Demos ; at least he could give them encouragement and advice. But he had no intention of leaving before the crisis.

It came six weeks after the month of Holy Truce was over. The Lacedæmonians marched to Tegea and sent the Argive Proxenus in Sparta as envoy to his city with two alternatives to lay before the authorities : war, or their immediate signature to a treaty of peace.

This treaty had already been signed by the Spartans, and the conditions it embodied among others were the restoration of the hostages in Orchomenus and Mantinea, the evacuation of Epidaurus, and a swift joining of forces with Sparta against any extra-Peloponnesian army—a clause directed against the Athenians.

In vain Alcibiades represented to the Council that if they signed this treaty and played into the hands of the Oligarchs it would mean the overthrow of their government; it was what the Chosen Thousand were plotting for and needed only the backing of Lacedæmonia. But even if the officials had had the courage to defy the army so close to their border they dared not brave the wrath of the Demos, a body far below the Athenian Demos in courage and intelligence, and composed in part of the soldiers who had run at Mantinea. The Oligarchs, who did most of the speaking in the theatre, prevailed and the treaty was signed. The Lacedæmonians once more marched home, and Alcibiades returned in wrath and disgust to Athens.

But here he found much to console him. His popularity was fully restored. The army had preceded him and those men whose lives he had saved lauded his bravery and generalship. The Athenians were quite willing to believe that if their favourite had been in command Agis would have been put to flight before he could arrange his large army into battle formation. That he had failed at Argos was not held against him, for the circumstances were known, and no people were more reasonable than the Athenians when in a reasonable frame of mind. Hyperbolus was gone, Nicias was still too ill to appear in public, and although the Oligarchs said many words on the Bema, their sneers and their accusations had been dissected to nothingness by Critias and other able speakers. And Athens was not Athens without Alcibiades. They had longed for his presence all these months, and when he returned

they gave him an ovation and listened to him eagerly in the Ecclesia.

He told them they must expect a revolution in Argos and a breaking of the Treaty, but they might also expect a brief duration of a government of hot-headed young men lusting for power and contemptuous of the rights of the people. No oligarchical government built upon the ruins of a democracy forcibly overthrown had ever endured; nor was it likely that Sparta would assist her new ally in the internal troubles bound to arise. Athens had but to possess herself in patience until the Oligarchs fell and the Treaty was renewed.

He spoke out of a deep knowledge of governments and the present conditions in Argos, and knew that when his prophecy was fulfilled his reputation for foresight and political wisdom would be appreciably enhanced. There was nothing the Athenians admired more than political acumen and precognition.

Only one disappointment awaited him. Tiy had gone on a voyage to Egypt, and might not return for a year, as she intended also to pay her long-desired visits to Syracuse and Carthage. She had left him her precious scarab as a token of her good faith.

The Nubian, who remained in charge of the household, brought it to him on the night of his arrival. He was alone in the thalamos dressing for dinner and he opened the alabaster box and looked at it closely for the first time.

It was an unusually large scarab, beautifully polished, with the name "Taia" cut across it, and, in minute characters, her biography and the record of her marriage to Amenhotep III. There was little he did not know by this time of that famous Queen, who had been the real ruler of Egypt during her husband's lifetime and her son's early youth, and as able as the ablest men in the history of her country. Tiy held her in reverence, and, he sometimes suspected, believed her own body

to be the present harbour of a soul weary of a thousand years in the realms of the dead. Were there any truth in the Pythagorean theory of reincarnation, what more likely ?

But that interested Alcibiades less than the fact that Tiy, whom he had never seen without the scarab, had trusted it to his keeping as an assurance of her return ; perhaps to dispel any doubt he might conceive during her absence of her devotion to his cause alone. She had not written him a note as another woman would have done. The scarab, her most precious possession, was more eloquent than any words of hers were ever likely to be. He was resentful and disappointed, for he had expected her to be his companion during some part of the day as ever, but this delicate gesture, almost feminine, in a measure consoled him.

He slipped the thin gold chain over his head and concealed the scarab under his chiton.

BOOK III

BOOK III

I

NEMEA was pacing up and down her bedroom, her full lips drawn in against her teeth, her beautiful luminous pallor a dull chalk-white with the rage that consumed her. Theodoté lay back on a pile of pale yellow cushions, chewing a bean and regarding her with some apprehension. She had seen Nemea in tempers before but never in a state of unrestrained fury. She earnestly hoped that one of the valuable jars which added so greatly to the beauty of the room would not suddenly fly at her head.

"If I could ruin him!" cried Nemea. "If I could ruin him! I would give my youth, my jewels, my power over men, to pull down that—that—that—— Oh! I can find no word!"

"Alcibiades," said Theodoté calmly. "With that name all adjectives are superfluous."

"False! Fickle! Liar! He has picked me up and thrown me down. Picked me up and thrown me down. Sent for me and changed his mind. Sent again, and then not for months. And now for a year he has not sent for me at all."

"You should have forgotten him by this time. A year! Gracious Aphrodite! And you never loved him—nor any man. Why should it matter?"

"Love him! Nemea may not love, but she can hate. It matters that I, Nemea, the first hetæra of Miletus, have been made ridiculous here in Athens. And I had held him longer than any! Had he loved me but for a month, two months, the world would have

forgotten as quickly as it forgot his other brief passions. But he gave me a position no other hetæra had ever held before in Athens. For three years, no matter what his inconstancies, he always gave banquets in my house—and he was away so often no one noticed those inconstancies. He made me the most famous and envied hetæra in Athens. And I am that no more! My position is affected. Men hold me cheaper."

"But surely, Nemea——" Theodoté settled herself more comfortably and inserted another bean. "Surely you know Alcibiades' reputation. He loves no woman long. You held him longer than any—no doubt because he was away in Argos for months at a time. You ask too much. Three years he favoured you. You surely did not expect to charm him for ever? *Alcibiades?*"

"I expected to win him back again and again—as I did for so long. And I should, had it not been for that cursed Egyptian. He thinks of no one but her!"

Theodoté shook her head. "The men do not believe she is his mistress. And what is it they don't know? Is she not more man than woman? And many hetæræ have been to his house this past year. Make up your mind to the truth, Nemea. Alcibiades is tired of you. Does he not tire of all women? And you are only a woman, after all. If he has been devoted to this Egyptian for four years—after all, she was away for one—what better proof that she is no more than his friend? His friend, like many men to whom he is faithful enough. Be content with what you had, and the jewels and the many minæ he gave you." Nemea was glaring at her and stood close to an alabaster jar. "Far from despising you," she added soothingly, "you are admired and envied that you held him so long."

"It is not so, I tell you, it is not so! I am no longer the first hetæra in Athens."

"Well, better so. All the others were ready to scratch your eyes out, and it is a wonder you have not been stabbed with a veil pin. It is far better to be one of many and liked by all. The others have liked you far more this last year—now that Alcibiades no longer gives banquets at your house."

"And you think that consoles me!" screamed Nemea. "You, lazy Corinthian that you are, like nothing better than to slip along easily through life with plenty to eat and drink and wear, and a generous lover, no matter who. But I am an ambitious and intellectual Milesian. We are not so easily satisfied. And I had won the first man of Athens. And would have kept him."

Theodoté looked at her keenly. "What is the cause of this sudden rage?" she asked. "I have seen you almost daily this past year, and you have been sometimes sulky, sometimes cross, sometimes moody, and I have known you to hiss at his name, but I have never seen you in such a temper as this. Not even when he returned the last time from Argos and did not seek you. Something new has happened. What is it?"

Nemea tore a rent in her gown and pounded her chest with her fist. "I will tell you. I went to his house last night. I slipped past the porter and hid in the thalamos. I had never looked so beautiful. My hair—is it not like gold—like the sun—is it not the hair of Aphrodite? It was unbound. My chiton was of gossamer, my perfume exquisite—it had come that day from Syracuse. . . . Oh! Oh! He came in! He—he——" And she beat her hands together.

"Well?" Theodoté sat up, eyes and mouth wide open. "What did he do, Nemea? Did he throw you out? How could he—but he must have——"

"Oh, no, he was merely polite! I could have found some means to overcome him had he flown into a rage. But he was the First Citizen of Athens, the

great gentleman, exquisitely polite, apologetic that he was too hurried to detain me. He opened the door and showed me out. Never did I hate him more than then—than now! Mighty Alcibiades! Five times elected Strategos of Athens, and more popular and powerful than ever! And I only a courtesan! But a courtesan is sometimes stronger than a king. There is one secret I've kept, but I'll keep it no longer."

"Secret? What secret? Don't be a fool, Nemea. How could you injure the great Alcibiades? Never has he been so firm in the affection of the Athenians. He has behaved with much discretion in public these last two years and more. Some say it is owing to the influence of the Egyptian, others that his defeat in the Ecclesia three years ago taught him a lesson. And now that he has conquered Melos—that island which even when Pericles was at the height of his power refused to become tributary to Athens—the Athenians believe he can conquer the world if he will. What else does all this talk about Sicily mean? Melos was a master-stroke, for no one else had ever thought of such a thing. And no one doubts that his was the plotting that caused the fall of the Oligarchs in Argos after but four months of power. And the Treaty renewed! Nicias, on the other hand, failed at Amphipolis. No one succeeds but Alcibiades."

"Succeed! Succeed! Alcibiades! And his arrogance and pride insufferable! He has made more enemies than ever before."

"Of course. Is not that the penalty of greatness? But they can no nothing."

Nemea's mouth was like a red slash in her white face, and Theodoté was once more alert. "What secret did you speak of just now?"

"Have you forgotten that night, here in my house, when he made sport of the sacred Mysteries of Eleusis?"

"Ancient history," said Theodoté contemptuously.

"Never too ancient to fill the Athenians with indignation and horror."

"And do you forget that he threatened you with banishment from Athens if you revealed that secret?"

"Ah! Perhaps! And suppose he went first? If I have never spoken before it is because I am not a fool. There is a moment for everything."

"Ah! Bah!" Theodoté looked disgusted. "Androcles has been hinting of late that some plot is afoot, but I have not bothered to listen to him. I have heard so much of plots! And one after another has failed. Alcibiades is the favoured of the gods. None of these little men that hate him can pull him down."

"You are quite loyal to a man who once threw you out of his house," sneered her friend.

Theodoté shrugged. "It was my fault. I forget what it was all about but remember I told myself at the time I had no one to blame but myself. And I am too indolent to harbour hatred and revenge—and get wrinkles and grey hairs. He is always charming to me when we meet, and as an adopted Athenian I glory in his greatness—if only because it infuriates Androcles. How sick I am of that man!"

"Life! Life!" muttered Nemea. "You are tired of Androcles who clings to you like a leech, and Alcibiades will have none of me, who am given no opportunity to cling! But revenge is perhaps sweeter than love."

Theodoté rose and stretched her long body luxuriously. "Take the goods the gods provide, Nemea," she advised. "Rhodippe's old lover Brotachus the Cretan is desirous of you——"

"A Metic!" shrieked Nemea. "You think I would descend to a Metic? I, who have entertained the greatest men in Athens in my house."

And then Theodoté made a fatal mistake. "Well, young Andokides then," she said carelessly. "He is

rich and independent and they say he will be a great orator and politician. As he hates Alcibiades you could amuse yourself intriguing against him. I saw him gazing at you at Damasandra's the other night, but it is said that with women he is still timid."

"Andokides. Andokides." Nemea stood regarding the carpet with drawn brows. Then her mouth relaxed and her eyes glittered "Yes," she said, "I have heard how he hates Alcibiades. And it is said that no young man is so clever."

"And now what idea has jumped into your head?" asked Theodoté curiously.

"I have told you too much already, and you are too good a friend of Alcibiades. I'll tell you no more."

Theodoté yawned. "Well, I'm off to have my nap. Take a nap yourself, dear Nemea—and smooth out that knit-knot from your brows. Indulge in no more tempers. Black wrath is fatal to beauty, and with your first wrinkle—Alcibiades would not think it worth while to banish you."

Then Nemea did throw a vase at her. She dodged it laughingly and ran down the stairs.

II

Theodoté walked slowly to her house, but a few doors away. Should she warn Alcibiades? Nemea was now but a habit, she cared for her no longer. And she had looked really hideous to-day and offended her sense of harmony and beauty. Why should a great man suffer perhaps a deadly injury from the spite of a woman?

Alcibiades was the only man in her brilliant career who had ever inspired her with an authentic passion, and she had forgiven him long since. And she was so bored with Androcles and his everlasting diatribes and plots. So far as her indolent nature could hate she

hated him—with his handsome fox-like face and his running to her with every grievance. He had almost talked her to death.

Long since he would have gone the way of others had any one appeared more tolerable. But the best had been snapped up, and far be it from her to court trouble with sister hetæræ. She loved peace, and Androcles was wealthy and lavish. Life had taught her philosophy.

She determined to take her nap and then think it over.

An hour later she had made up her mind. To approach Alcibiades was impossible; he guarded himself too well. What a blast he must have given that porter! Nor dared she send for him. Androcles came in at all hours.

She would call on the Egyptian—and accomplish a double purpose. No one had ever excited more curiosity in her feminine breast. Hera only knew how she would be received, but she could give insolence for insolence, and at least she would see the creature and the inside of that house.

She dressed herself discreetly in a blue mantle and covered her face with a veil. It was possible the Nubian might recognize her and she had no intention of being turned from the door.

The Nubian did not even guess her calling, but he stared at her in amazement. No woman had ever asked admittance to that house since he had been its guardian.

Theodoté's tall fine figure was drawn up with a fair assumption of authority. "Tell the Mistress that a lady of Athens would speak with her," she said imperiously. "And on a matter of importance."

He admitted her and motioned to a bench in the court, but she followed him noiselessly and when he opened the door of the andron was close behind. Tiy was sitting by the central hearth, for the early spring

day was chilly. She was writing a letter on her knee and barely glanced up. Theodoté passed the Nubian swiftly and threw back her veil.

"I am Theodoté, O daughter of Setepeura," she said with an accent of confidence, albeit with an inward shiver as she met those long oval jewel-like eyes filled with cold inquiry. And when Tiy rose slowly to her feet, she felt suddenly small and insignificant. But she summoned her courage. After all, this amazon would hardly assault her.

"Go," said Tiy to the servant. "And now—I do not understand——"

"Who I am?"

"I know, of course, who you are. But why have you come?"

"Not from curiosity, O Tiy, nor with any thought of intruding. I have come to speak of Alcibiades."

"Ah!" Tiy raised her heavy eyebrows (Theodoté looked at them with envy). But she was interested and curious. "Will you not sit!"

She pointed to a chair, and Theodoté took it gratefully. Tiy sitting was less formidable. It was difficult to begin, and she took refuge in the feminine personality. "You have seen me, then? At the theatre, perhaps?"

"Yes——" Tiy hesitated, then shrugged. "And before that. Why should I not tell you? Do you remember the banquet at the house of Nemea when Alcibiades took my brother Setamon? Well, I was Setamon for the night."

"You—you——" gasped Theodoté. "You were there when they profaned the Mysteries? It was of that I came to speak—to ask you to warn Alcibiades. Nemea has made up her mind to betray him. She fancies he has ill-treated her, and would have revenge."

"Ah!" Tiy frowned at the fire. "It is remarkable that secret has been kept as long as this."

"Alcibiades threatened us all with banishment if we told, and of course the men would be discreet."

"And now—you would have him banish Nemea? What good would that do? She could reveal her secret as well from Miletus as here.... Ah.... Ah...." She spoke meditatively, staring into the fire. "Were this Egypt I would have her thrown at night to the crocodiles, but in Athens it would be difficult to make away with her."

"Oh! Oh! Demeter and Kora!" Theodoté could hardly articulate. "You would not murder Nemea?"

"No. Not here. I have no desire to drink hemlock and be thrown into the Barathrum. A pity she could not have been sent to Melos and sold into slavery. It might have been managed if you had spoken to me before."

"I only knew to-day—and I wish Nemea no bodily harm——" She half rose, regretting bitterly that she had come to this terrible woman, who talked as callously of murder as of killing a mouse. She herself often spoke lightly of poisoning a rival or executing vengeance with a veil pin, but in truth she was incapable of inflicting on a fellow being more than a scratch, or a slap at the most. "I—I——" What *should* she say?

Tiy laughed at the beautiful horrified face, very young and naïve for the moment. "I have never murdered any one," she said soothingly. "But we Egyptians—Barbarians, you call us, do you not?—are perhaps ruthless. And so were your Athenians at Melos, although they call themselves the most humane of all Greeks. But altruism should never interfere with affairs of state. No Nemea should be permitted to interrupt the career of an Alcibiades."

"That is what I said to myself!" exclaimed Theodoté eagerly, reassured by that rich laugh, and comforted to learn that no blood had stained those hands, ivory-

white, lying so calmly on the lap of Tiy's wine-red chiton. "But what—what can be done?"

"You must let me think. . . . I may or may not consult with Alcibiades."

"As you say! She could write. Or scream it from the housetop before she left."

"There are ways of intimidating," said Tiy musingly. "Ah! One of my slaves knows how to make a potion that destroys beauty—I have overheard her. You shall take it to Nemea and threaten to throw it in her face——"

"No! No! No!" Theodoté's voice rose to a shriek. What a woman! "Not I. She'd pretend to agree to everything I said and then run a pin into me."

Tiy shrugged. "I can send one of my singing girls. They speak Greek. It is not likely she would have the girl arrested, for she would hardly care to have the case before the courts."

"No. She will never admit, either, that the profanation took place in her house. I know every turn of Nemea's mind. She will consult with some enemy of Alcibiades—Androcles perhaps—no, she hates him. Some one else. They will say, more than likely, that the ribald drama took place in his own house. Athens will believe anything of that house. Every man who was present that night would confirm that lie, if called upon, for to admit they had made sport of the Mysteries in the house of a hetæra would make it worse than it is. It would be hemlock for all of them."

Once more Tiy looked into the snapping pine cones. "If my house were in Piræus—closer to the water . . ."

And once more Theodoté shuddered. Was this really a woman? And did she love Alcibiades? Not a ripple of passion, even of alarm, had crossed that formidable countenance. She looked like some barbarian ivory goddess, coldly dispensing justice to helpless mortals. But when Tiy turned suddenly and

smiled she looked not only human but surpassingly beautiful, and Theodoté was fascinated by the curves of that long sinuous flexible mouth.

"You are very brave and very kind," said this astonishing person warmly. "Be sure you shall never be betrayed to Nemea. Perhaps it would be better to destroy her beauty without warning. She will then think of nothing else."

"Oh, no! It is a crime to destroy beauty. Age withers it soon enough. Let even Nemea keep it while she may."

Tiy frowned. "And Alcibiades? Is he—his great career—his consequence to Athens—of less import than a woman's fleeting beauty?"

"Yes—no—oh, I don't know! Did you visit such a terrible vengeance upon Nemea—and I its cause—it would haunt me all my life."

"Then she shall be made to drink hemlock. My Nubian will go to her house in the dead of night and force it down her throat. The world will believe she committed suicide. Have it as you will."

"Oh, why did I come here?" Theodoté wrung her hands and looked about her in desperation. "I thought only men could be as cruel as that, and then only in war."

Tiy smiled again. "You forget that the women of Egypt are even as the men of Hellas. My mother ordered more than one execution. If a person is a detriment to the State she is removed—or he, if you prefer. We have few criminals among the men. I assure you that cruelty has naught to do with justice. Were this woman tried for a crime before the courts of Athens and justly condemned to death, who would call the judges cruel? There are times when a potential criminal must be disposed of in secret, for the good of all concerned. And this woman deserves death because she would send Alcibiades into exile—or worse."

"I believe you are Fate," muttered Theodoté.

"Fate that we all so dread! Oh, give her a chance for life! Send for her and threaten her with anything you like unless she leaves Athens at once with a seal on her lips. Tell her your vengeance will reach her wherever she goes. You could make any one believe anything you chose. And terrify any one! Oh, you must! You must!"

"And I suppose if I do not give her that opportunity you will warn her?" Those long black eyes, suddenly burning, seared her very soul.

But Theodoté set her teeth and shook her shoulders. "Yes," she said after a moment, and her voice was steady. "I shall warn her."

Tiy shrugged. "It is against my better judgment, but I give way. I have no wish to be what you call cruel, whatever you may think. I merely planned to avert a greater disaster. But will she come if I send for her? Delay may be fatal. It is not wise that I go to her house—although I should not hesitate——"

"She will come. From curiosity, if nothing else. But whom shall you say was your informant?" she added uneasily.

"I shall tell her that Setamon told me of that night, and that I have recently heard of her hatred of Alcibiades. That is quite true."

Theodoté drew a long sigh of relief. "I leave it in your hands. Let me think of something else!" Her bright glance darted round the room. "I had heard much of your house—but I was told that the andron was hung with gold tissue—and the columns festooned with ribbons."

"That is for the summer. I cover the walls with these rugs when the weather turns cold. I am used to a hot climate and feel the cold of an Athenian winter—although no doubt it is healthier."

Theodoté rose. "You are even more wonderful than I had heard," she said. "But I wish I had not

come. I would have had her banished, but not hurt—not—not killed."

"She shall have her chance," said Tiy reassuringly. "And as you have left it in my hands dismiss it from your mind."

And with that Theodoté was forced to be content and took her leave.

But Nemea sent for Andokides within the hour and made her betrayal. She regretted her confidence to Theodoté and was determined to lose no time. She fascinated that youth completely; he gave her a hundred minæ for the story and vowed no harm should come to her. There were men to bribe in Athens.

Tiy sent for her that same afternoon and delivered her ultimatum. Dumbfounded, but secretly exultant, she promised, after the proper amount of bluster, to go to Miletus; and willingly enough, for she had contemplated a visit for some time. It would be a triumphal return to her native city, laden as she would be with rich booty, and famous for her long association with Alcibiades. When that brute was in exile she would return to Athens.

She vowed by all the gods and goddesses, and more particularly by Aphrodite, that the secret of that night's revel should never pass her lips. Tiy knew that no hetæra ever broke her oath to Aphrodite. Nemea was too clever to protest that she had not dreamed of betraying Alcibiades. She admitted it freely, but said she never could have brought herself to do it. He had been very generous to her at one time; moreover, she would have feared for her own life. His friends! That Critias! Tiy knew little of women as women. Nor had she a man's knowledge of them. She let her go.

Nor did she speak of the matter to Alcibiades.

III

Alcibiades had not yet recovered from his grievance at Tiy's thirteen months' absence, although he had been busy enough during that time between Argos and both duty and pleasure in Athens. He had never passed her house without a sigh or a frown, more often the latter, for he had grown accustomed to the thought that she lived for him alone. If he loved her, he told himself, it was as Achilles loved Patroclus, although in those barbarous days there could have been little of mental companionship. He had felt as if a part of his mind had gone off on a long voyage, and the other part always half-conscious of an ache.

He had consoled himself, however, and devoted his days to enhancing his popularity. He had been choregus for a group of Sophocles' plays and out-done all others in splendour. He had contributed largely to the monthly festivals with which Athens enlivened the existence of her people; ravishing the eye with beautiful processions, providing the excitements of horse-racing, torch-racing, gymnastic and lyric contests, celebrations of past victories, feasting and drinking. He also exhibited the Alcmæonid horses in impromptu chariot-races on the course beyond the city walls, which men of every degree were invited to witness.

He rioted no more through the streets, but his house had been the scene of many wild symposia. Nevertheless he had not neglected his public duties for a day, for he had no intention of having his career as a Strategos interrupted again. When his prediction was fulfilled and the Argives cast out the Oligarchs and renewed the Treaty, the Athenians gave him unqualified admiration. It might be true that he was dissolute and extravagant, but these faults of youth in no wise interfered with his public energies, and no one gave them such entertainment, such constant material for joyous comment. When he cut off the

tail of a dog that had cost him seventy minæ, and his friends remonstrated, saying that every one was criticizing him and sorry for the dog, he laughed and replied : " Why else did I do it ? If the Athenians gossip about my dog's tail they will forget to say worse about me." He had a shield made emblazoned with Cupid wielding a thunderbolt, and a part of the deck of his trireme cut away that his mattress might swing on girths instead of resting on the planks. He wore his purple mantle in public whenever he happened to be in the humour, nor did he hesitate to trail it on the Bema. In vain his enemies protested at his insolence, or sought to assure the Athenians that all these and other spectacular performances were designed by a deep mind to divert their attention from both his dissipations and his ultimate designs. Sometimes they were angry, but Aristophanes best expressed their feelings in the line :

They love, they hate, they cannot do without him.

Moreover, in spite of all predictions the Treaty between Athens and Sparta still endured. That hereditary enemy, save for an occasional irruption into Argive territory, seemed to be sunken in lethargy.

After Tiy's return, and he haunted her house as of old, his thoughts swung once more to the future. Her descriptions of the wealth and beauty of Carthage and Libya, of Syracuse—which he had seen only once during a brief visit—and of Acragas on the southern coast of Sicily, reawakened his ambition to conquer those cities, ambitions that had slept during his Peloponnesian activities and his determination when at home to divide his time between pleasure and cementing his popularity.

He well knew that his first object of conquest should be Amphipolis, but he doubted the success of that enterprise at present and had no desire to associate his name with failure. When, however, the friends of Nicias, alarmed at the ever-growing ascendancy of

his younger rival, reproached the Athenians in the Ecclesia for their indifference to the great city they had lost in the north, and adjured them to send a fleet under their leader to compel its submission, Alcibiades made no remonstrance. He knew what the result of that expedition would be, supported as Amphipolis was by Perdiccas, King of Macedonia, and his belief was justified. The failure of Nicias, however, did not affect his restored if somewhat tepid popularity. It was as if the Athenians, doubtful of their extravagant admiration for Alcibiades, thought it wise to balance the greater excellence with a lesser. There were furious discussions as to which of the two was First Citizen, but at least Nicias could not vie with Alcibiades in splendour, nor did he make the effort. Clubs dictated fashion, and those of Alcibiades were the stronger and more numerous.

He had dismissed the idea of further aggressions against Sparta for the present. Although she seemed to be averse from another general war, her victory at Mantinea had demonstrated her powers and renewed all her old influence over jealous allies.

He looked beyond the present for the ultimate conquest of that state, and meanwhile excited the Athenians by reminding them of their fast recuperating strength, flattering their vanity, alluding sadly to their magnificence under Pericles, before possessions of import both to their reputation and their treasure-chests had been lost through a war that was no fault of theirs. This was done so gradually and subtly that even his enemies could not pin him down to a policy, but the time came when the Athenians began to talk among themselves of wealth flowing into their coffers once more, from old quarters and mayhap new, until Athens was an even greater power than she had been in the past, and Amphipolis would not dare remain without the Empire, even under the wing of Perdiccas.

The large and wealthy island of Melos, relying on

the protection of Sparta, had declined to become a member of the Delian League, when Athens, inspired by Aristides and Themistocles some sixty years before, had formed into a confederacy the Ionian and Ælian cities on the coast of Asia Minor, the most important of the islands in the Ægean Sea, and a large number of towns (Greek in origin) on the Hellespont, the Propontis, and in Thrace; paying yearly tribute to Athens in consideration of the protection of her navy from the constant threat of Persia. There had been an attempt in the seventh year of the war to draw her into the Empire, but she had resisted; they had had no time to waste on her and she had continued to prosper in obscurity.

Alcibiades carried the Ecclesia with him when he demanded the conquest of this island and the transference of its treasure to Athens. He sent a fleet to besiege the city unless its people agreed to the terms offered them, pretending to no excuse for his attack on a peaceful island save the law of the strong over the weak. The people of Melos refused to surrender, and after a siege of four months the city was starved into submission, every man was put to the sword and the women and children sold into slavery. The island was re-peopled with Athenian colonists, and a rich treasure conveyed to Athens.

There was an outcry all over Hellas at what was regarded as an act of wanton brutality, but it was the response upon which Alcibiades had calculated. Athens must be feared again, her enemies inspired with uneasiness and apprehension. More important islands marked out for enthralment would be intimidated by the fate of Melos.

The Athenians themselves, exultant over the ownership of this wealthy sea-state, to whose relief the Lacedæmonians had not ventured, were in a mood for further conquest. Many young men had come of age since the end of the Peloponnesian War, and, with

few exceptions, were followers of Alcibiades. Even the sons of uncompromising Oligarchs were not to be restrained, for he fascinated them personally and promised what every young man wanted: a life of action and adventure. Many of the older men forgot the disasters and suffering during those ten years of war and remembered only the victories. Even the followers of Nicias had caught the general restlessness.

Alcibiades had found time to go to the Olympian games, but with only three chariots. It was no longer necessary to demonstrate the unimpaired wealth of Athens to a sneering world, and there were times when he thought it wise to economize; he had squandered a large part of his fortune, a secret source had been cut off of late, and he relied upon future conquests for the replenishment of his chests.

At Olympia he found himself the hero of the Festival from the first day. By this time his name was ringing throughout Hellas, and whether in fear or admiration all men strove to do him honour. The Theôri from Ephesus pitched a magnificent silken tent for his pleasure. The Lesbians had brought him a hundred skins of their most precious wine. Chios insisted upon furnishing his horses with provender and himself with animals for sacrifice. He was showered with costly gifts and banqueted every night. Two of his chariots were victorious, and once more he returned to his city to lay olive branches on the altar of Athenè. This new triumph, following the island conquest, put the Athenians in a temper to listen to any proposals he might make, and he had already laid his plans.

When Segesta, a Hellenized city on the western coast of Sicily, was menaced not only by her neighbour Selinus but by Syracuse, and sent an envoy to Athens, with whom she had had a barren alliance for thirty-three years, to ask for protection, she found the people prepared to listen to her. Their own list of grievances, as Alcibiades had reminded them, not once but many

times, against Syracuse and other Dorian cities of Sicily was a long one. The Ionian cities, Naxos, Leontini, Catana, were constantly menaced and sometimes despoiled by the more war-like Dorians ; Leontini had finally been conquered and reduced to the status of a Syracusan fortress.

The Segestans made a deep impression upon both Council and Ecclesia, for they came not as suppliants like the Leontinians, but to warn even while asking aid. The Dorians in Sicily were growing more powerful and rapacious year by year, and if left to themselves would conquer not only the Ionian cities of the island but the rest of Magna Græcia on the coast of Italy. The Dorian cities were daughters of the Peloponnesus, and if Sparta renewed the war with Athens she could count on their navies and hoplites. If Athens valued her salvation she would strike first.

They spoke several times in the Ecclesia. Alcibiades was their eloquent advocate. Critias and others added their fuel. Many of the dispossessed Leontinians were refugees in the city, and they excited the pity and indignation of the Athenians. Nicias would not listen to any suggestion of sending an army to Sicily, but he was a poor speaker and so was Phæax. Antiphon wrote brilliant pamphlets anathematizing the contemplated "adventure, inspired beyond a doubt at the source by Alcibiades, bent upon glory and booty." The spoken word had ever more effect with the Athenians than the cleverest diatribes they were forced to sit down and read ; nevertheless, prudence so far prevailed as to send an embassy to Segesta to make personal inspection of the treasure of the city, alleged by the envoys to be sufficient to pay the expenses of the campaign.

The Athenian envoys returned in the early spring full of enthusiasm over the portable wealth of the Segestans, and with an instalment of sixty talents. As Nemea took her departure, she heard the cheers

on the Pnyx that greeted the renewed persuasions of the Segestans, and their great advocate Alcibiades.

IV

Alcibiades dined alone with Tiy on the following evening. Indeed, he always dined with her when not giving or attending a banquet, for that andron, with its golden brightness in summer and its walls covered with glowing rugs during the cooler months of the year, attracted him almost as irresistibly as Tiy herself. Even her lamps seemed to shed more light, and she had long since provided him with a couch, although she sat upright herself. Alcibiades sometimes wondered if she lay down in bed.

He came in looking more triumphant than ever, were that possible. Tiy could have sworn that blue sparks darted from his eyes, and the firm curves of his mouth were almost as flexible as her own.

"We have won, Tiy!" he exclaimed, slapping her on the back as if she were Critias. "We shall go to Sicily, and Alcibiades will return at the head of that fleet, with glorious adventures to relate and a rich man once more. I would I could go out as first in command! But they seem to think they cannot ignore Nicias; and they have appointed Lamachus as a sort of balance between us—more likely to keep the peace! I would you had been there to hear the speeches, Tiy. Nicias lost his temper and attacked me in all but name. He informed the Athenians I was too young to be named in the command, and that I had 'exhorted them to this expedition for my own selfish interests . . . looking to admiration for my ostentation in chariot-racing, and hoping to profit from my command and make good my extravagances.'"

He assumed a drooping attitude, grasped the small of his back with one hand and waved the other feebly

in the air. His voice croaked slightly. Tiy could almost see a straggling grey beard.

"'Do not let such a man gain celebrity for himself at the hazard of the entire city. Be persuaded that such persons are alike unprincipled in regard to public property and wasteful as to their own, and that this matter is too serious for the rash counsels of youth. I tremble when I see before me this band,'" wagging his finger—"'sitting by previous concert close to their leader in the assembly, and I in my turn exhort the elderly men who are near them, not to be shamed out of their opposition by the fear of being called cowards.' And so on and so on."

"I can imagine your retort," said Tiy dryly. "Your insolence must have been unsurpassed even by yourself."

Alcibiades laughed. He began to walk up and down the room; the tables had not yet been brought in. "Quite right, O Tiy. His words had made an impression and I was in haste to defend myself. I told the Athenians that I had a better title than any man to the part of commander and I accounted myself fully worthy of it. The very matters with which he reproached me were not merely sources of glory to my ancestors and myself, but of positive advantage to my country. Were not the Greeks upon witnessing my splendid Theôri at Olympia five years ago induced to rate the power of Athens even above the reality, when they had believed her broken by the war? I dwelt upon my seven chariots and my three prizes, the most signal victory ever witnessed at Olympia. I recounted my exhibitions in Athens, choregic and otherwise, which, I remarked, were naturally viewed with jealousy, but in the eyes of strangers were evidences of power. Such so-called folly was by no means useless when a man at his own cost served his country as well as himself."

He was standing still, his head thrown back, an expression of lofty disdain on his face; his hands quiet, for he rarely made gestures or moved about when he spoke. Tiy realized that he was once more on the Bema. He had not removed his white mantle, and, with his helmet, the sun shining on his perfect beauty, she could imagine the effect he produced on the Athenians, particularly when he succeeded Nicias or Phæax. No wonder that in their more enthusiastic moments they half believed him to be more god than man.

He went on, his tone, confident and proud, flicked with scorn. "I know that men of this lofty spirit, and all who have been in any way illustrious, are hated while they are alive, by their equals especially, and in a lesser degree by others who have to do with them; but that they leave behind them in after ages a reputation which leads even those who are not of their family to claim kindred with them, and that they are the glory of their country, which regards them not as aliens, nor as evil doers, but as her own children of whose character she is proud. These are my own aspirations, and that is the reason my private life is assailed; but let me ask them if in the management of public affairs any man surpasses me?"

He came to himself and laughed gaily as he met her considering eyes. It was characteristic of him that he was not in the least embarrassed. "Yes, the Ecclesia was before me at the moment. And they were willing to listen to me while I recounted what I had done in the Peloponnesus, the friends I had made for the State, and the skill with which I have repeatedly settled affairs in Argos—giving time I would fain have passed in Athens. Then I reverted to the subject of my youth and what is supposed to be my monstrous folly. 'And now,' I said, 'do not be afraid of me because I am young; but while I am in the flower of my days, and Nicias enjoys the

reputation of success, use the services of us both. Having determined to sail, do not change your minds under the impression that Sicily is a great power '—Nicias had tried to frighten them. And then I went on, of course, to use my own arguments in favour of the expedition.

"When I had finished Nicias came forward with what he thought was a master-stroke. He exalted the strength and power of the Syracusans and told the Athenians he must warn them that a force at least three times greater than they anticipated would be necessary. Syracuse was not Melos. He even enumerated the enormous quantities of food we must take, the wheat and parched barley; the cooks and bakers, and what not.

"But he overshot the mark. The Athenians were worked up to an even greater enthusiasm by this illustration of the vast and magnificent enterprise upon which they were about to embark. The matter was settled then and there—— Ah! I shall do justice to this dinner! I have been on the Pnyx since dawn, and had no luncheon but a loaf passed me by a friendly farmer."

She let him eat in silence, and he disposed of half a lobster, two quail, and a plate of vegetables, in perfect enjoyment of the present. He gratified his sweet tooth with the delectable Egyptian cakes, and after he had drunk a goblet of wine—Thasian in honour of the occasion—he disposed himself at full length on the couch and clasped his hands behind his head.

"Are you not tired?" she asked curiously. "After a whole day on the Pnyx—and so much excitement?"

"I have never felt tired in my life," he said scornfully. "I feel a pleasant languor, that is all. And I'd rather be here to-night than anywhere in the world."

He felt serenely happy and at peace in the warm

beautiful room with a beautiful woman opposite who would not expect him to make love to her, who understood his every mood, and yet was never afraid of him. Tiy wore a long chiton of white wool girdled with red, and no ornament but the scarab and the heavy gold net that fell to her shoulders—a curious combination, as ever, of the barbaric and the modern.

She regarded him with amusement.

"So Alcibiades has got his own way again? Beloved of the gods! But your gods are said to be jealous. Do you never fear they will turn and smite you?"

"I have never thought of such a thing. The gods are pretty inventions and very useful to tragic poets. Also for exclamatory purposes. I put my faith in Alcibiades and none other."

"But there must be gods," she said musingly. "Whence came this world and all in it? Who rules the wind and the waves? Why does the sun rise and set with precision, and the same stars shine forth every night——"

"All natural laws," said Alcibiades impatiently. "Our philosophers have delved deeply into the mysteries of nature and will solve all in due course —they or those that come after. And you have one set of gods and we another! If such supernatural beings existed, the gods of one country would always be at war with another, and agree upon nothing. Chaos in the world. I wonder that you—of all women—credit such nonsense."

"But, as Akhnaton believed, there may be but one God, and that would account for all things."

"Possibly. But nothing interests me less. How are your patient Persians?"

"They are rejoiced at your enterprise against Melos and its results. They believe you have now really begun to act. Still more when you induced the Athenians (as they think) to send those envoys to

Segesta last year, although it will be long before they hear of to-day. Do you believe in that treasure ? "

" No, I do not. No more than Nicias. The envoys were undoubtedly made fools of by the Segestans. But I care nothing whether they can pay the expenses of the war or not. The loot of Syracuse and Acragas will reimburse us a hundred times."

" Why are you so sure you will come back in command ? " she asked him.

" Because Nicias' health will give out. He is a sick man and will take the first excuse to come home. The Athenians must be mad to send a weak old man in command of a great expedition. They think only of his good character and his successes in the past, and do not reflect that he has never been really tried. He has no desire to go—give him credit for that—for he fully understands the magnitude of the undertaking, if they do not. Nor would he go were it not for me. If I were in disgrace and the fleet could go out in command of Demosthenes he'd take to bed and groan his fill. But to think of Alcibiades free of all restraint, and possibly going on to Carthage and Libya—far better to sleep on the hard deck of a ship ! "

" I cannot cultivate your enemies any more," she said after a moment, " for they suspect they have been duped in the past and know that you come here daily. Offers of marriage were long since withdrawn ! But Young Pericles was here yesterday, and he is deeply worried—that devoted young man—because the more conservative of the Athenians, even those who approve of the war, fear you will win such renown and power by this great enterprise—for no one seems to doubt its success—that you will set yourself up as despot when you return."

" Despot. Tyrant. When have I not heard those words ? They were buzzing about my head even before I went to Olympia with my seven chariots. If the Athenians but knew it they need a despot, one

who would guide their destinies in a straight course, make them masters of all Hellas—and control their wavering impulses. Athens was great under the Tyrant Pisistratus, and greater under Pericles, who was Tyrant in all but name. Democracy is played out. It has served its purpose. A great state needs one master-mind to govern it, not six thousand, few above mediocrity. Why should they fear me as a Tyrant? I would give every man complete liberty in all but affairs of state. Each could think as he would, and believe in the gods or not, without fearing persecution. Never shall I forget those terrible days when Aspasia's life hung by a hair. Democracy! And Protagoras and Damon banished again! All sophists and philosophers would be welcome in my state, and be supported if necessary—although I'd not let Aristophanes make Socrates ridiculous again; he has never been so well thought of since *Clouds* made all Athens laugh. But I would restore the glory of the Athens of Pericles, and make her more beautiful than ever. Be sure I should be an amiable despot, not an unjust nor a cruel one. Such cruelties as I have ordered have been politic, not wanton. And I should go out and conquer new worlds for the Athenians to rule over."

"Under Alcibiades! But the Athenians are passionately individual and passionately democratic. The Oligarchs are few in number, nor would they welcome a despot of their own class—the less, no doubt, for that reason."

"My dear Tiy, they would not be asked. In the first place, I should send them all into exile unless they promised—and practised—submission. The moment will come when Athens will give me a crown if I ask for it. Be sure I shall not make the mistake of demanding it too soon."

And then he fell asleep.

V

ATHENS was a busy city during the next two months. The Generals were in their houses for many days enrolling recruits, for every man of fighting age wanted to go on this romantic adventure, and the trouble lay in selecting those most fitted for service, not, as on former occasions, employing coercion. Private traders who would follow the fleet for profit were equally active, and soothsayers and circulators of oracles prophesied success to groups of eager listeners ; all but Socrates and the astronomer, Meton, who shook their heads. Galleys were sent to Crete for bowmen and to Rhodes for slingers ; personal messengers from Alcibiades to Elis and Mantinea for hoplites.

The ships were fitted out and emblazoned as never before. Sparta, Amphipolis, all else, were forgotten ; the very atmosphere vibrated with excitement. If there were faint hearts they were carefully hidden, and if women wept behind their walls, who was there to heed ?

Alcibiades had never felt happier. He was about to embark on an enterprise worthy of his powers. No man was ever filled with more dazzling hopes. His house was crowded daily with young men, all of whom would have gone on his ship ; but if this could not be, at least in his division. To him alone was the credit of this great adventure, and they worshipped him the while they marvelled at his quiet efficiency. All were as exalted as if they were going on a holy crusade at the bidding of the gods instead of setting out for conquest, plunder, and possibly massacre.

It crossed Alcibiades' mind once or twice that few of his friends would be left in Athens to defend him if necessity arose, but he had neither the wish nor the design to disappoint them, and gave them first preference ; when the pressure became too heavy he had recourse to the drawing of lots. Young Pericles, who

had hesitated to push forward, found himself left behind.

"Never mind," said Alcibiades, consolingly, "other ships will follow if the war is a long one, and you will have your chance with Demosthenes. Meanwhile, look after my affairs here. I leave them in your hands and Tiy's."

The young man's brow cleared a trifle. "Be sure I shall do that! But I cannot but hope the war will be a long one. I doubt if your enemies will give me much to do, for most of them have enrolled—except Androcles, who is a member of the Council, and Andokides, who, I hear, is bitterly disappointed."

"It is well to be prompt in affairs of this sort," said Alcibiades dryly. "You should have come to me at once. Why has not Andokides enrolled with Nicias or Lamachus?"

"He injured his foot and is laid up. I hear he has not yet left the house."

"Well, watch him. But if all goes well with the fleet, what can my enemies accomplish? I intend to make no mistakes, and when I return in triumph I defy them to do their worst. The army is full of my friends! But should anything go wrong here, inform me at once, and consult Tiy in all things."

Alcibiades had always risen early, even after a debauch, and in these days he had no need of boiled cabbage. He was far too occupied for night revels and so were his friends. Many of them were trierarchs, and vied with one another in fitting out their ships with efficiency and splendour. They engaged their own sailors and personally inspected everything from tackle to figureheads. The clubs met for consultation only.

He rose in the dark of an early morning six days before the time set for the sailing of the fleet, for he intended to walk to Piræus. He found his own bread

and wine and let himself out of the house. He carried a lantern, and as he flashed it up and down the street in search of lurking foot-pads, he became subtly aware that something was wrong.

But no one was in sight. The houses on either side were dark and quiet, each proudly guarded by its Herm : a block of marble the height of an ordinary man, the upper part cut into the semblance of the bust and head of the god. All old-fashioned Athenians believed that where Hermes' half-statue stood there was he domiciled, to the benefaction of his votaries. And no intellectual had ever dreamed of removing the Herm erected by his fathers.

Hermæ . . . Hermæ. . . .

Alcibiades' abstracted consciousness suddenly leaped into action. The difference between this and other dark quiet mornings lay in the Hermæ.

He flashed his lantern on the one before his own house. The nose had been hacked off. The underlip was gone. A hole had been chiselled in one cheek.

Alcibiades, irreligious as he was, recoiled in horror and resentment. Hermes was the most beloved of all the gods, for the Athenians felt so intimate with no other. In childhood he had often prayed to the Herm before the door of Pericles for things he ardently desired and given it due credit were the favour granted. He forgot he had sometimes beaten it when the favour was withheld.

And this half-statue had stood here for only the gods knew how many years ; the Persians when sacking the town and destroying the temples had given no thought to the thousands of Hermæ, incomprehensible as it was to them that anything so rude in appearance could have even a sentimental value.

On this benign head the old porter had hung an olive branch when the first-born of Cleinias, to be called Alcibiades, entered the world, and for that reason if no other he would have valued it. What incompre-

hensible spite had inspired its mutilation? It was worthy of a Hyperbolus.

And then he crossed the street hastily and examined the statue opposite. It was even more shamefully mutilated. This extraordinary exhibition of malignance then had not been directed at him alone.

Even more puzzled than angry he walked up the street flashing his lantern. Not a Herm had escaped. Forgetting his engagement in Piræus, he traversed street after street and found them all desecrated. He entered the Agora. The great row of Hermæ and those before the temples and public buildings had been systematically mutilated.

By this time he was filled with an alarm in which personal resentment had no place. He dreaded the hour when the Athenians would issue from their houses and be greeted by this abomination. Resentment would be a mild word to express their feelings!

It might be accepted as an omen to delay the expedition. And the fleet to sail six days hence!

The dawn had come. All Athens would be awake in a few moments. He did not care to be seen wandering about the Agora alone, for who knew what his enemies—— A sudden horrid fear clutched his mind with such force that he almost staggered. Tiy's house was near by, and he shut its portals behind him as quickly as possible. She was on the roof, and he strode up and down the colonnade until she should come below, hesitating to disturb her at her devotions.

But impatience finally mastered him and he ran up the stair. Tiy was walking slowly toward the trap-door, her head bent and her brows knit, but when she saw him she gave an exclamation of alarm.

"What is it?" she asked. "I never saw you look like that—almost frightened. You—Alcibiades!"

"I am frightened," he said grimly. "A frightful thing has happened." And he told her of the outrage, stammering and distracted.

"Ah," she said. "That was it, then. I could not sleep last night and came to the roof. All night I saw dark figures flitting up and down the streets and heard a curious sound of hacking. I knew that something was going on in the Agora, but the moon was too young to give much light."

"And you recognized none of them?" asked Alcibiades eagerly.

She shook her head. "I was too far away for that. I thought I recognized a characteristic gesture of Andokides as a man ran across the Agora, but I could not be sure. And once I thought I heard that peculiar drunken chuckle of Androcles, but it might have been that of one of the many hundred Athenians I have not met."

"Gods! Gods!" muttered Alcibiades. "It is the work of my enemies as I thought. Why didn't you send out your slaves and have them dragged in here and identified?"

"A mad suggestion, Alcibiades. And remember I am accustomed to nocturnal revels in the streets of Athens. I knew some mischief was afoot, but I never thought of the Hermæ. You should have police by night as well as by day."

"True enough—listen!"

A loud cry had sounded in the city. Then another and another. Shouts and high hysterical voices screaming out questions. The sound increased in volume until it was almost a roar. Men were lifting their voices in distraction as if an unheralded enemy were at the gates of the city.

They poured into the Agora and ran to the Hermæ. Fists beat the air, faces were distorted with anger, curses were uttered with an accent of terror. Many wept and wrung their hands.

"You see!" cried Alcibiades. "You see! No Spartan invader ever caused anything to equal that. They believe their beloved Hermes will never forgive

Athens. That some terrible calamity is about to befall her. And it is my enemies who have done this in the hope of ruining me!"

His accent was wild. For the first time in his life he knew the sensation of terror, for he was confronted by malignant unknown forces; this man who had never known terror on the battlefield and laughed at his enemies. But he knew the hideous power of superstition, and that it might be days, perhaps months, before those outraged men would listen to reason.

Tiy took his arm and led him to a seat under the canopy.

"Were this my first year in Athens," she said, "I should wonder at your apprehension and the excitement of those men—what a clamour! But of course I understand what the mutilation of those beloved and sacred Hermæ means to them. But surely they will reason—or if incapable of reason, know by instinct—that you would be the last man to do anything to delay the fleet. More likely that outrage was committed by Megarian or Syracusan spies in the hope of preventing the expedition. I give your enemies credit for more sense."

He shook his head. "You may or may not believe that. I know this is a plot of my enemies. Words in the Ecclesia have been unavailing. They have ceased to command attention in private. This is the work of men who know the temper and the peculiar religious affections of the Athenians. Foreigners would have desecrated a temple of Athenè or Dionysus. Nor would any of Nicias' friends have done it. It is the work of young men like myself who have no belief in the gods and no fear of their wrath; and who know that the desecration of a temple, although it might excite indignation, would never inspire the horror and fury of this outrage on the Hermæ. Androcles and Andokides are at the bottom of it. They believe the blame may easily be shifted to me—known as the

wildest spirit in Athens ! What other names they will insinuate or bring action against, the gods only know."

" But surely they will have to prove that you did it or instigated it. And that—how can they ? "

" There are plenty of men to be bribed, and should they put my slaves to the torture the poor wretches would say anything that promised deliverance from agony. . . . Gods ! I am behaving like a child frightened in the dark." He sprang to his feet impatiently. " I'll go down and show myself, add my excoriations to theirs, find out how the land lies—not hide here. You have given me strength when I most needed it." And he took her impulsively in his arms and kissed her ; not noting the swift change in her face from ivory to scarlet, for in another second he was running down the stair.

VI

The Agora was so densely packed with hysterical men that he could hardly make his way. He heard accusations of all sorts flying about, wild rumours, religious apprehensions, curses on the perpetrators of the outrage ; and they questioned him eagerly. But he was relieved to see no averted faces, to hear no angry mutters of his name. However, it was quite possible the worst was to come.

The violent excitement of the morning receded but was replaced by a grim wrath even more ominous. That the outrage was a part of some conspiracy, not the act of drunken revellers, no one doubted ; the mutilation was too universal and systematic. Little was known outside of select circles of the advanced views of the young intellectuals. It was accepted as a political conspiracy, and mingled with the fear of divine vengeance was a terrible suspicion that their liberties were threatened. Were the gods so infuriated

as to withdraw their protection, what might not these internal enemies accomplish ?

But Alcibiades' dire apprehensions were unrealized. The Athenians made up their minds as one man that the expedition should not be delayed, for this was no omen from the gods, but the act of men who would deprive the State of further glory. Nor was there any credence given to the actively circulated rumour that it was the work of their favourite. Far more likely he was the object of the conspiracy than the instigator of it. Mental turmoil, so far, had not destroyed their common sense.

An immediate investigation was demanded, and large rewards were offered for information that would lead to the arrest of the offenders. The Council of Five Hundred named commissioners to prosecute inquiries, and public assemblies were ordered daily to consider any evidence that might be forthcoming.

In spite of the tempting rewards the mutilation of the Hermæ remained a profound mystery, and excitement once more took possession of the city. The gloom and agitation were in no wise decreased by the Festival of Adonis that occurred on the third day of the futile investigations. It was one of the few women's festivals, one of the rare occasions when they were allowed to go abroad unveiled and unattended, and they made the most of it. Dressed in deep mourning, they carried figures resembling corpses through the streets, weeping and tearing their hair, lamenting like mourners at public funerals.

" Wail Adonis ! Wail Adonis ! " All day long the lugubrious sounds rent the air and deepened the feeling of depression on the Pnyx.

Alcibiades, however, had recovered his accustomed cheerfulness and serenity. The expedition would not be delayed, and his enemies had overshot their mark—if indeed the mutilation had been the work of those clubs. He was beginning to believe with Tiy that it

was the act of Metics suborned by Syracuse or Megara —or by the Corinthians, who would have resorted to any means to prevent the destruction of their most profitable market.

He was sitting close to the Bema with Critias and other members of his club, and deeply resenting a superstition that could turn a great and intelligent city like Athens into a graveyard from sunrise to sunset, when he saw Pythonicus, a member of one of the enemy clubs and an intimate friend of Andokides, ascend the Bema, and felt a slight stirring of anxiety.

"Now, what is he up to?" he muttered. "He'd not hesitate to denounce his own father if it would benefit him."

"Let us hope he has some evidence that will clear up this cursed matter once for all," replied Critias, "and bring those scoundrels to justice before we sail."

"Lying evidence, be sure of that——"

But the man had begun to speak, and with his first words Alcibiades felt as if everything within him were turning to stone.

"Athenians," said the voice of Fate from the Bema, "you have heard rumours perhaps that the Holy Mysteries have been profaned in private houses. I am here to warn you that one of the Generals whom you have selected to lead a hazardous enterprise is the chief of these offenders. I impeach Alcibiades son of Cleinias, of the deme of Skambonidæ, as guilty of crime in regard to the two goddesses Demeter and Kora; in mimicking the Mysteries and exhibiting them to his companions in the house of Polytion; wearing the costume of the Hierophant, applying to himself the name of Hierophant; to Polytion that of Torch-bearer; to Theodorus that of Herald, and addressing his remaining companions as Mysts and Epopts. Pass a vote of immunity and I will produce to you forthwith a slave of one of the guests, who will describe to you that act of desecration. Deal with

me in any way you choose if my statement prove untrue."

Alcibiades had fully recovered himself before the man finished speaking. It was a terrible accusation that had been brought against him, but his courage as ever rose to meet the tangible danger. When Pythonicus had left the Bema he made an imperious gesture, and the dazed President of the day called his name. He mounted immediately. The mass of faces he looked down upon were horror-stricken, but there was no outcry.

"Athenians," he said with the great dignity he could command at will, his flashing eyes alone betraying his excitement, "I think you will take the word of an Alcibiades against that of a slave, for Pythonicus himself admits he was not present at that unthinkable orgy. I deny every word of that abominable accusation. As far as I know no profanation of the Sacred Mysteries ever took place in the house of Polytion, or if they did I took no part in them, as he will testify. But I can safely assert that he never lent his house nor his countenance to such a carousal, for it is not like him; moreover, as we are intimate friends, sooner or later he would have spoken of it to me.

"I repeat, I believe you will take the word of Alcibiades, who has never neglected your interests and always striven to advance them, when I swear to you solemnly that every word that man—one of my worst enemies—uttered was a lie. Never forget, Athenians, that my enemies are determined to ruin me and will stop at nothing—as they have just proved! I leave this outrageous accusation to be disposed of by your good sense."

But although his brief, earnest, yet confident speech produced an impression, the Prytanies ordered that all who had not been initiated into the Mysteries should leave the Ecclesia, granted immunity to the slave, and ordered him to be brought forward. The man made his

deposition. He had been present, he said, and had seen the Mysteries parodied in the house of Polytion by Alcibiades, Niciades, Theodorus, Meletus, and other men whose names he did not know, but who had dressed themselves as Demeter, Kora, and Pluto. He gave every detail of the performance at the house of Nemea, and Alcibiades, who had begun by listening with the contempt a trumped-up accusation deserved, was soon filled with a profound consternation. Nemea had given those details to his enemies before she left Athens! They had prefaced the accusation by the outrage on the Hermæ in order to confuse and agitate the minds of the Athenians into believing the worst that could be said of any man. It was a plot of dark and cunning minds, minds of no mean order and as ruthless as Fate. He set his lips grimly as he determined the course he would take when those men had said their worst, and sat with folded arms and head erect while Andokides (suddenly recovered) made a violent speech denouncing him as the enemy of Athens, scheming even to be its despot. Not only was he guilty of the horrid profanation of the beloved goddesses, but he was cognizant at least of the mutilation of the Hermæ. It was all a part of a deep-laid scheme to subvert the democracy and make slaves of men who for so long had enjoyed the blessings of freemen. What better proof could they have, demanded Andokides, who was a favourite orator on the Bema, than the lawless, overbearing, anti-popular, anti-democratic demeanour and conduct of this man who already acted as if he were Tyrant of Athens? Who more likely than he to instigate and take part in the profanation of gods and goddesses they all revered?

After he had exhausted his eloquence, and others that succeeded him, Alcibiades, who had signalled to the President, mounted the Bema once more.

"I shall not make another denial," he said in a clear quiet voice, "for I hold it beneath me to enter into

controversy with liars and slaves. But I demand an immediate trial. A trial to take place before the sailing of the fleet. I think that as you have honoured me by electing me to the office of Strategos no less than five times, and have named me second in command of that fleet, and as my assailants are publicly known as my enemies and rivals, who have sought in the past to pull me down from the proud position I have won through my services to the State, you will admit that I ask no more than my right. If it can be proved before the dicastery that I have committed this crime, and that it is part of a plot to subvert the democracy, they will deal with me as with any other criminal, and I will submit to their decree. But it is not fair to send me forth without having been given a chance to defend myself and prove my innocence, and leaving behind me enemies who will not cease to machinate against me in my absence."

He looked straight at Andokides, Pythonicus, Thessalus, Phæax, and other members of those clubs as he spoke, and saw them exchange glances of uneasiness. That would be no part of their plan ! He finished by asking the Ecclesia to decide upon an immediate trial then and there; but although his words and demeanour had made a deep impression, the hour was late, and when Thessalus moved that the Assembly be adjourned until the morrow, there were shouts of approval, and the President dismissed them.

Alcibiades was accompanied to his house by the members of his club, and they sat far into the night discussing every aspect of this bold plot that had been sprung on the eve of departure. The enemy had hoped for a condemnation there on the Pnyx by the angry and terrified Athenians, no doubt of that. They would move heaven and earth to prevent a legitimate trial. Alcibiades, Critias, and the deeply-disturbed Polytion made a shrewd guess as to the morrow's procedure, and prepared their speeches and retorts.

VII

It was indeed no part of the enemy programme that Alcibiades should be granted an immediate trial. His eloquence and his cleverness would make short work of the evidence, and it was quite possible that Polytion would be able to prove that no such performance ever took place in his house. Their weak point was that the scene of the profanation was the house of Nemea, and that the fascinated Andokides had given his word to that siren that no accusation would be brought against her. She should have been detained in Athens and forced to give evidence.

Their second mistake lay in not having staged the scene in the house of Alcibiades. Mysterious reports were always circulating of the orgies held in that house, and the story might have gained immediate credence. They had refrained lest he demand his servants be put to the torture, and they knew the devotion with which he inspired his household.

Were he tried while the fleet was still in harbour he would have the whole army behind him. To such a pitch of indignation would it be roused that he might seize the occasion to overturn the democracy, and the Oligarchs, not the Demos, would be the first to suffer. Hemlock for all of them !

They concocted another plot and suborned two men who had never come forward as enemies of Alcibiades. These men on the morrow, with a fine affectation of candour, begged the Athenians not to delay the expedition—inevitable if the second in command were given an immediate trial. A trial took many days, often months ; the fleet might be detained in harbour until the following spring. Moreover, the allied fleets were already assembling at Corcyra. There would be disgust and confusion, perhaps the abandonment of the enterprise. Let the fleet sail now, and the trial take place when it returned. It was quite possible

the allegations were false, as Alcibiades protested. Why waste precious days—months—to investigate what might be a mass of misinformation that could wait upon the future? The fleet should sail at once, and as the great services of Alcibiades were indispensable, he must sail with it.

The Ecclesia might be deluded by these specious arguments, but not Alcibiades. He mounted the Bema and gave full rein to his eloquence, imploring them to begin the investigation of the charges that very day. He was ready to stand his trial and suffer death if found guilty, and would retain his command only if acquitted. Nothing could be worse for the expedition than that one of its Generals should sail under the suspicion of a criminal offence, nor could he give the best of which he was capable with such a menace hanging over him.

Critias followed with his terse vigorous speech, ridiculing the idea that the sailing of the fleet would be delayed for more than five or six days at most, and appealing to the justice of the Athenians, each of whom would have demanded an immediate trial were such a vile accusation brought against him. Polytion, Meletus, and Theodorus made specific denials and also demanded the trial that would exonerate all of them.

But no eloquence availed. The Athenians had been impressed by the argument that the trial might consume several months, for when many witnesses must be heard on both sides, and speech after speech listened and replied to, no man could say how long a trial would last. The enemies of the expedition might manage to delay the verdict indefinitely. They determined the fleet should sail on the day appointed and Alcibiades with it. The Mantinean and Elean hoplites had announced they would not go without him, and only the gods knew what disaffections there might be if the fleet arrived at Corcyra with no Alcibiades. They took a formal vote that the fleet should

sail two days hence and that Alcibiades should not be permitted to resign his command, but hold himself in readiness to stand his trial within a month after his return.

"Better so," said Critias, as they left the Pnyx. "They will have forgotten all about it before your return."

"I don't know. I don't know." Alcibiades shook his head, although he recognized this might indeed be the case. "I leave Androcles and Andokides behind me, and few friends. But—well—there is nothing to do now but brush it off my mind. The gods know I have enough to attend to."

VIII

THE next two days were so filled with inspections, preparations, interviews, that Alcibiades had little time for farewells. On the evening before he sailed he paid brief visits to Aspasia, Socrates, his son, who, since the flight of his mother, had lived in the household of Axiochus, and long after dark went to the house of Tiy.

The night was very warm and they sat in the court by the fountain. She had heard all the speeches from her window, and they discussed the matter calmly.

"It is impossible," she said, "for me to entice Androcles and Andokides here again, but young Pericles will keep me informed. I shall be prepared to act quickly if anything goes wrong. Critias was here this afternoon and seems to think that if you are away long enough any mistrust these men may have caused by their accusations will die out and the trial never take place. And that if you return covered with glory no man will dare lift his voice."

"That may work both ways," he said, laughing.

"If I return covered with glory it may be to a city carefully educated to resist a despot! However—that is a chance I am ready to take. If I were only first in command! Should we have a swift victory at Syracuse there will be no Carthage and Libya. Nicias is taking his doctor with him, and he will defy his body as long as possible. . . . What I dread more than anything else is his slavery to omens. Not only is he taking soothsayers along, but if there were an eclipse of the sun or an earthquake on the eve of victory, when every moment was precious, he would call a halt and not move until the next day. Would that he might die as we sight the Italian coast."

"A pious wish! But no doubt it would be better for Athens. The Athenians are still in some ways an incomprehensible people to me. To send a man nearly old, ill, timid of purpose, slow of thought, hating war and loving peace, in command of an expedition bent upon violent conquest! It is an enterprise for the young and ardent. With you first in command and Demosthenes as a check—it seems to me they might be more certain of the issue. And that, I understand, is the feeling in the army."

"Yes, but the army is composed largely of young men, and although the Athenians may look to me to bring the war to a successful issue, they not only respect Nicias, who has a good record, but they fear I may be impulsive and rash. As a matter of fact no man is less so. I may be reckless in peace, but never in war. That is an anomaly no man can reconcile who has not been with me in battle, when I have been in command of either hoplites or cavalry—or a commander in a naval engagement. More than once I have taken complete command of a division when a General has fallen, and either led it to victory or effected a retreat without loss. But although they are convinced of my abilities, or they would not send me out, leaving such men as Demosthenes at home,

my life in Athens has been too spectacular, and they are more or less affected, whether they realize it or not, by all this talk about despot, Tyrant, what-not. However—we shall see ! I am not the man to let any opportunity slip."

They sat for a few moments in silence and he stared at her unconsciously. The court was flooded with moonlight. The city was quiet save for the barking of dogs and the lonely hoot of the owl. Somewhere a nightingale was singing. His last night in Athens ! When should he see it again ? Listen to the sounds that had been familiar since childhood, sit by a splashing fountain in an Athenian aula ? He suddenly felt a profound and unaccountable melancholy.

But he shook it off angrily. "It seems to me you look thinner," he said abruptly. "Or is it the chastening moonlight ?"

"I eat little in hot weather—and these have been anxious days."

"Yes," he said, and it was characteristic that he took her anxiety for granted. "I wonder you could eat at all. If Saon had not stood over me I should have eaten nothing myself. And as for those two days ! We certainly have our Hades on earth. Pluto's could be no worse."

"But you had been fortunate too long ! Every life has its dark moments. Even Alcibiades cannot expect life to smile on him always."

"Perhaps." He shrugged impatiently. "I had dark moments enough at Matinea and in Argos. And there have been darker on the battlefield when I thought death would snatch me—but nothing, nothing to what I have undergone since that horrible morning. I think," he added naïvely, "my most poignant sensation was that so terrible a menace could hang over Alcibiades."

Tiy laughed. "Well, it may do you good. It is not wise to be too sure that Life is your friend, for no

mortal is more unreliable. And if Life had not petted you for so many years you would be less arrogant and have fewer enemies."

He threw his head about like a mettlesome horse. "I shall conquer Life—and all my enemies. Were I less arrogant I might be less confident of my powers. As for those hideous days—I shall dismiss them from my mind as the fleet sails out of the harbour. By the way, I have arranged that you go to the roof of Callias to-morrow morning. It will be a great sight. You must start two hours before dawn, for all Athens will be pouring down to the port, and the army will march at sunrise. Better take the road through the valley. . . . What do you do with yourself, Tiy?" he asked with one of his mental somersaults. "I mean with your time when there are no guests in the house? I know you take long walks out into the country with that black horror of yours, but you have not the resources of other women. You do not spin and weave, nor do you read, nor spend your mornings in learned discourse like Aspasia. You were used to a life of great activity in Thebes; life in the market-place or Council Chamber—whatever you call it in Egypt. And you have been here five years. Save for that one year and a month when you deserted me. It is a strangely inactive life for a woman of your people—I have often wondered——"

"I am flattered to learn you ever think of me when not in my presence! But I am not idle. I have important correspondence. I do read. I read your poets and the history of my old friend Herodotus. I have learned to look after my household, as there is no man here to do it for me. I thought at one time of sending for my father, but after my experiment with Setamon I concluded to introduce no more Egyptian men to Athens. I discovered that my slaves were cheating me, and I have a Master's Chest in my room in the Athenian fashion, and am my own steward.

Agathon was my instructor. I assure you that my time is well occupied."

"Yes—yes. But you are twenty-six. You told me that night we first met that when you were thirty —how was it ?—you would have seen enough of other parts of the world and go home and exercise power in your own country. But could you live again in Egypt—after Athens ? "

"No—I think not. I prefer life in Athens. It is possible I shall live here always. Quite aside from my friendship with you and all the excitement and interest it has brought, I find the men of Athens with their high and restless intelligence, their versatility and imagination, far more congenial than the women of my country. That I should live to say that ! "

"They are men," he said dryly. "You have learned here in Athens, where men are men, not worms, that they must ever be more interesting to a woman than any member of her own sex, however important. Tell me—tell me—do you not find a change in yourself ? If you were not almost as heroic in size as Athenè Promachus there on the Acropolis I could think, myself, that you are more woman than when you came to us. At all events, you are not nearly so overpowering ; and you are as sympathetic as any man—— Ah ! You would laugh. Well, as Aspasia, then, was to Pericles, and to me when I was a boy. Women are supposed to be sympathetic, but I have never looked for that quality in them. I prefer the intelligent sympathy of men. That is your charm—the charm you have developed. You have the sympathy of man and woman perfectly combined. Now, tell me—do you not feel less a man than when you came here ? "

She moved her shoulders lightly. "What are you asking me to admit ? That I am turning into a woman to fall in love with ? "

"Well—I don't know. It might be—no, I still

think I do not want to fall in love with you. It might be serious, and I should hate the idea of taking love seriously. A man exercises his serious side with his responsibilities and his ambitions. Love should be light and fleeting. No—that was not it. I thank the gods I do not love you now, when I must leave you for months—years, who knows ?"

He stared at her with a puzzled frown, pulling at the curl above his ear. "After all, men were in love with you long before this. Many have been since, no doubt." He leaped to safer ground. "What I suppose I really meant was—are you still convinced that the woman's state is superior to man's ? That women are superior to men ? You must have done a great deal of thinking here in Athens !"

She smiled for the first time. "I have gone far if not as far as you think. Women govern better than men—but I may be considering Egypt alone, and we are not as mercurial as the Athenians. But I have thought much, as you say, and I have come to the conclusion that the ideal civilization would be one where men and women lived in a state of perfect equality. One sex can be as tyrannous as the other, and that makes for the happiness of neither. If I were an Athenian, and your state had long since accepted all women as the equals of men, should I not make as good an archon, prytany, dicast, as any man ? Deny it if you dare !"

"I don't think of denying it. Would that I could leave you in charge of the State ! And you would make a magnificent figure on the Bema. But surely you would not lead armies to battle ? Amazons are myths."

"Amazons, perhaps. But why should I not lead armies ? I am as strong as you are, and as brave. If Egypt were plunged into war to-day it would be the women who would do the fighting. The men are not fit for it. It has happened before and may be happen-

ing now in other women's states. There is no difference, as I told you before, between men and women save in the mere matter of sex. Each has exactly the same mental and physical possibilities."

"Yes. . . . That may be . . . must be. . . . But after all, women still bear children, and that weakens you for a time as no man is ever weakened—unless he has a fever, which has nothing to do with sex. Women stay in bed for many days after giving birth to a child, and look like a rag for months."

"Not our women," she said scornfully. "They get up the day after and go about their business. The husband goes to bed with the infant for twenty-one days."

Alcibiades threw back his head and burst into one of his joyous roars of laughter. "What a comedy for Aristophanes! Why have you never told him that delightful incident of your civilization? And why is the poor man put to bed? To keep the infant warm?"

"Partly that, partly for a more subtle reason. In all ways we make them feel their insignificance. As you do, with your women."

"And if your ideal State were realized, who would go to bed with the baby?"

"The nurse, of course—were it necessary. Your nurses, I am told, have almost full charge of the children, and are even imported from Sparta for the purpose. As you had a Spartan for your son, he was deprived of no care when his mother deserted him."

"True enough. And if you ever go back to Egypt I advise that you take up the law as a profession. No man can get the best of you in an argument But what would love be like in your state of equal rights, equal bodies, equal intellects? It is the feminine that enthrals men—the contrast——"

"You mean the sense of superiority. You also forget that men love other men. And as for your love of women, it is a degradation of the word: a contempti-

ble mixture of lust and vanity. If you lived in an ideal civilization where you had never known any women who were not your equals, you would love them with no regrets for a legendary past."

"And I suppose vanity would have been educated out of us! Although for that matter men feed it as much as women."

"Be sure that human nature would change little. Sex has nothing to do with that! Men—and women—will always flatter the great and powerful—and those to whom the gods have given beauty and fascination. In any state you would still be Alcibiades."

"Then should I be reconciled," he said gaily. "And now I must go and get four hours' sleep."

They both rose and he looked at her hesitatingly. "I would ask something of you, Tiy," he said almost humbly.

"Yes? What is it?"

He touched the scarab with the tip of his finger. "Perhaps I, too, have my superstitions," he said, colouring. "But it gave me great comfort that year."

She lifted the chain instantly and threw it over his head. But when he would have kissed her impetuously she drew back and grasped his hand and shook it warmly. "I shall wave to you in the morning," she said, "and wish you good speed and good luck."

"But I'd like to kiss you good-bye," he said rather sulkily.

"Kissing means little to you. You have kissed too often. Go now, and get your sleep."

He took himself off in something of a huff, and hardly knowing whether he were disappointed or piqued.

IX

The roofs of the houses in Piræus, the hills above the port, the theatre on Munychia, the docks, the very

walls of the city were crowded with Athenians and Metics, and they looked upon a dazzling sight. A hundred triremes, the three banks of rowers in position, rode proudly on the blue still bay, their sides black with pitch but gaily emblazoned; the sails were of many colours; the superb figureheads, gilded, silvered, bronzed, cut in semblance of gods, heroes, or their favourite characters from the tragic poets. Alcibiades' *Achilles* bore a winged Victory.

The farewells had been said to relatives and friends, who stood on the docks, and every man was aboard. The cavalry officers wore their scarlet capes, short, sleeveless, belted tunics, high boots, and broad hats. The Generals were more soberly attired, but their brazen helmets flashed in the sun. Every hoplite carried his shield—blazoned with the device of his fancy—and held his spear upright. On the deck of each vessel was a large krater filled with wine, a gold or silver goblet beside it. The sails were set, although there was little wind on that radiant gold and blue morning. Last good-byes, gay or sad, were called back:and forth, and there was an exchange of chatter between those on the shore and the nearest of the ships. Black anger and Hermes were alike forgotten. A few fathers wept, but the general feeling was one of exaltation, if not exultation, as they looked at those splendid ships with their proud and confident men. And a mere third of their famous navy! No enemy would dare attack them in its absence.

A herald mounted an elevation and blew a loud blast on his trumpet. Silence fell abruptly. The Generals and commanders dipped the goblets into the kraters and poured the libation. The herald lifted his voice in a solemn chant, and the rowers dipped oars. Every man on ship and shore joined the herald in the prayer to the gods to bless the expedition: a deep, sonorous, emphatic invocation, rising in volume until it sounded like a command. No one would

have been surprised to see the heavens open and reveal Zeus sitting on his throne. But Zeus hid his face.

The pæan followed and was sung with joyous confident voices. When the last echo had died away among the hills, the herald blew another blast, and the sailors bent to their oars as one man.

The harbour entrance was very narrow and the ships passed out in single file, the three Generals leading. As Alcibiades passed the house of Callias he fixed his eyes on the roof. Tiy's tall figure was easily picked out, as she stood, clad in white, among the distinguished company Callias had invited: Aspasia, Sophocles, Euripides, Socrates, Gorgias, Aristophanes, Alcamenes, the sculptor; Xenophon, a promising pupil of Socrates, and his friend, Young Pericles.

Alcibiades lifted his spear with one hand and touched the hidden scarab with the other. She waved her red sash.

Almost a last signal between lovers, he thought with some humour, albeit with a pang of regret. For even in war he might miss her.

When all the ships had emerged from the harbour they formed abreast and raced one another to Ægina, followed by a stupendous cheering. There they turned south-west and proceeded more sedately around the Peloponnesus and up the coast to Corcyra, far in the north.

The maritime allies awaited them, and after an imposing review, the armament, consisting of one hundred and thirty-four triremes, five hundred ships containing provisions, muniments of war, cooks, bakers, masons, carpenters—and a large number of trading ships—sailed across the Ionic Gulf in three divisions, each under one of the Generals. Three fast ships were sent on ahead to Segesta to demand the promised tribute.

Nicias did not die as they approached the Italian

coast; unfortunately for himself, Alcibiades, and the Athenian Empire.

The cities of Magna Græcia on that coast—Taras, Heraclea, Thurii, Kroton, Locri—manifested none of the enthusiasm the Athenians had expected. Whether they apprehended a loss of their liberties at the hands of that haughty armament, or feared to be called upon to feed too many mouths, or thought it wise to preserve a strict neutrality, they closed the gates of their cities and refused to sell provisions, in some cases permission to moor and water. At Rhegium, however, on the Sicilian straits, although there, too, the gates remained shut, a market was set up without the walls, and the army was allowed to encamp in the sacred precinct of Artemis. Legs were stretched gratefully, and the most fiery young warriors thought pleasantly of their tents.

"Here we shall have to wait until the ships return from Segesta," grumbled Alcibiades to Critias. "And then what? Delay and more delay, if I know Nicias. He is comfortable in his tent with his doctor pouring drugs into him and will be in no hurry to move."

"Well, there'll be fighting enough when we get at it. Let us make the most of having our feet on land for a bit. Come for a walk."

The ships returned from Segesta with thirty talents, the sole remaining wealth of the city. A fraud had been perpetrated on the envoys by borrowing the plate of other cities and gilding their own.

There was an immediate consultation between the Generals. Nicias wore an air of calm triumph. "It was what I expected," he said.

"Well, what of it?" asked Alcibiades impatiently. "Athens is well able to pay the initial costs of the war and we have had ninety talents from the Segestans. The wealth of all Sicily will amply repay us."

"I have no intention of attempting the conquest of all Sicily," said Nicias with a glitter in his eyes,

"although I well know your desires and the dreams of the men you have inflamed. Our instructions from the Ecclesia were to proceed to the relief of Segesta. I purpose to adhere rigidly to the letter of that vote. We shall therefore sail there and formally demand that they shall provide the means of maintaining the armament. When they protest that this is impossible, we will obtain from the Selinuntines tolerable terms of accommodation for Segesta, and then sail around the island exhibiting this magnificent display of Athenian power. We will then return home, having done our duty."

Alcibiades' eyes, too, were glittering, but he replied gently, "You forget, Nicias, that there are three Generals in command of this expedition, and that the voice of the majority will prevail. Else would you have come out alone in command. For one, I denounce your policy as narrow, timid, and disgraceful, and absolutely reject it." He turned to Lamachus. "Do you agree with me or not?" he asked.

Lamachus, a fine soldier of much experience, replied promptly but with more deference to the first in command. "I must agree with Alcibiades, O Nicias. We not only should disappoint the Athenians and incur their displeasure if we accomplished nothing after all this preparation and display, but we should have thrown away a great opportunity. I vote we proceed to Syracuse at once and lay siege. She can be but half prepared, and, no doubt, is terrified. There must be vast stores of provisions still without the walls, which we can seize. If we strike now we may intimidate her into surrender."

It was an admirable plan, and although Nicias merely frowned, Alcibiades felt the force of it. But it went against his grain to accept the plan of another man and he had rapidly been forming one of his own: averse as his impatient nature ever was from

delay, he had his reasons for wearing Nicias out before laying siege to Syracuse.

He spoke with his usual authority. "I think the best plan would be to open negotiations with the other Sicilian Greeks, especially of Messene, convenient both as to harbour and as a base for military operations, and prevail upon them all to co-operate against Selinus and Syracuse. We should also establish relations with the Sicels of the interior, and detach them from Syracuse, as well as ensure a supply of provisions. Then when we have ascertained to what extent this foreign aid may be relied upon, attack Syracuse and Selinus."

Lamachus was unwilling to renounce his own plan, for he had had more experience in naval sieges than either of the others, and he knew the virtue of surprise, but he was a man of the people, and like all passionately democratical Athenians, he was overawed by the Eupatridæ. Nor could he imagine any one standing up against Alcibiades. As neither of his colleagues would yield, he cast his vote for the younger General, and Nicias, with little grace, was forced to submit. Alcibiades, in his turn, agreed to renounce the siege of Syracuse should that city consent to the re-establishment of Leontini, and Selinus to make handsome terms with Segesta—well knowing what the answer of both would be.

It was decided not to go to Selinus at present but try out the temper of neighbouring states. Messene refused any concessions beyond selling a certain amount of provisions. The Naxians, farther down the coast, were cordial and allied themselves readily with this powerful friend, but their harbour would not answer as a base of operations. Katana, which had a fine harbour, succumbed to Alcibiades' eloquence, and a sudden influx of Athenian soldiers, who had effected entrance by a postern gate.

The fleet paraded before Syracuse, ascertained that

no preparations had been made for putting a naval force afloat, ravaged the surrounding country, and set out for Katana, now the headquarters of the fleet. The next move would be to penetrate the interior and win over the Sicels, native tribes that held themselves aloof from both the Dorian and Ionian settlements, but inclined to the former. After that the fleet would move on Selinus. Already two months had passed since the departure from Athens, and Alcibiades hoped the Ecclesia would resent the slowness of the enterprise and recall Nicias, or that disease would be equally importunate. He agreed with Lamachus that it would be the height of unwisdom to delay the siege of Syracuse much longer.

X

Alcibiades was standing at the prow of his ship, his impatience appeased for the moment, his imagination ranging far beyond Syracuse, when he caught sight of an unfamiliar trireme outside the harbour of Katana. A moment later its sail was spread, and as it approached he recognized the ceremonial ship *Salaminian*—and was assailed with a sudden dire presentiment.

The *Salaminian* hailed the *Achilles*, both slowed down, and were grappled together. The commander and several petty officers of the ceremonial ship boarded the *Achilles*, and Alcibiades went forward with eyebrows raised, betraying nothing of the anxiety that beset him.

"What is the meaning of this, Hipponax?" he asked. "If you come with a message from Athens it should be delivered to the first in command. It is only by accident that my ship leads the fleet."

The commander looked embarrassed, almost apologetic. "My message is for you, O Alcibiades," he said. "And I would speak with you alone."

"Certainly. Come this way." As he turned to walk back to the prow he felt a small tube of metal in his hand and doubled his fist on it.

"Now—what is it?" he asked haughtily, when they were out of hearing.

"Many things, O Alcibiades, have happened since you left," stammered the man. "The agitation regarding the Hermæ was revived after the excitement of the departure of the fleet was over. A Metic and another came forward with testimony and forty-two men were indicted. Some fled. Several were put to death. And then—the—the agitation of the Mysteries was revived. Thessalus, son of Kimon, impeached you in the Ecclesia for profaning them in your own house, and brought forward several witnesses. It is therefore decreed, O son of Cleinias, that you return at once and stand your trial. But there is to be no arrest. You will return in your own trireme." He looked at him anxiously. Would this popular hero create a revolution in the army then and there?

If any such plan crossed the mind of Alcibiades he dismissed it promptly. He had never been in favour of any momentous act that involved precipitation. No revolution could be effected on the spur of the moment, save as the culmination of a general grievance, and these young warriors, bent upon conquest and individual glory, were in no mood to fight Athenians. Moreover, there were the allies to be considered. With the exception of the Mantineans and the Eleans they would inevitably side with the first in command. And he wanted to read that roll of papyrus in his hand before he came to an ultimate decision.

"Very well," he said. "I will return with you."

"I have other names," said the commander; and he read from a list: "Polytion, Meletus, Theodorus." Alcibiades noted that the name of Niceratus was omitted from the second accusation, no doubt out of regard for his father.

"Those that are not in my ship shall be transferred here, and these hoplites to another," he said. "We had best now proceed to Katana."

It was not until he was alone in his tent that he dared unlock his hand and and read the letter. It was unsigned, but he recognized the handwriting of Young Pericles.

"Greetings, Alcibiades:

"For Zeus' sake, dearest and most admired of men, leave the ship at Thurii, and come not back to Athens to stand trial, for your life will be forfeit. The city is in a terrible state; what went before was as nothing. A fair trial is not to be thought of. They will condemn you to death. There will be no escape for you if you enter these gates. The best pleaders could not save you, for all the love the Athenians had for you is turned into hate and naught but your life will satisfy them. I have not the time nor the gift to describe the temper of the city. At Thurii—at the harbour gate—you will find a friend who will explain all, and hand you a large sum of money to take you wherever you think it best to go. Your estates will be confiscated, but you can rely on your friends. Sums will be sent to you whenever you demand them.

"May Zeus almighty, the saviour of the world, keep you, beloved Alcibiades."

He stood thinking for many minutes. What was to be done? He ground his teeth at the thought of flight. A fugitive from justice! He! Alcibiades! For the moment he gave no thought to his shattered ambitions, so irked was his haughty spirit at the idea of skulking and dodging. But it was that or hemlock.

Critias entered the tent. "What is it, Alcibiades?" he asked anxiously. "I know by your face that something unfortunate has happened. And all are wondering why the *Salaminian* grappled your ship instead of going on to the *Theseus*——"

Alcibiades handed him the letter. "From Young Pericles," he said.

Critias read it hastily. "Gods! Gods!" he exclaimed, beating his fists together. "This is worse even than I imagined. But he is right. You must leave the ship at Thurii, and put yourself in the hands of this friend, whoever he is. *Gods!*"

"And hide like a rat in a hole!" said Alcibiades savagely.

"Nonsense. You would be worse than a fool if you entered Athens with the grand air and defied the Athenians while they are bereft of their senses. Go somewhere and live quietly until they have recovered them. A year from now—less, perhaps—they will be ashamed of themselves and recall you. But for Zeus' sake do nothing rash. Remember that not only your life but your whole future is at stake."

"*My future!*"

"Yes. I have too firm a conviction of your great destiny to regard this as aught but a setback. Hide yourself for a time. Keep quiet. Do nothing to anger the Athenians further. It will be only a question of months before they beg you to come back to them, and then you can do with them as you will.—Oh, curse Androcles! Curse Andokides, and all the rest of that lying jealous crew!"

Alcibiades had been walking up and down the narrow confines of the tent. "Very well," he said at length. "There is nothing else to be done. Will you send Polytion, Theodorus, and Meletus here? They also are summoned and must be warned. And hide that letter until the camp fires are lit and then destroy it. I dare not risk it, as I may be watched."

Critias left the tent and a few moments later three pale young men burst in. Alcibiades told them of the impeachment, and quoted parts of the letter he had received.

"I shall manage to have the *Achilles* arrive at

Thurii at night," he said, "and we can slip ashore unnoticed. Then we must separate. What money have you?"

They compared their resources and found they had a considerable sum. One of them had an uncle in Kroton, but a short distance down the coast from Thurii, and they agreed to go there separately and meet at his house. They could rely on their families in Athens to provide them with funds.

Then they looked at Alcibiades with a sudden access of sympathy. After all, he was the chief sufferer. Their own ambitions were not overpowering, and their passionate admiration for one who had ever seemed to be the darling of the gods made them forget their own danger for the moment. They tried to express themselves and bade him look to the future.

Alcibiades was feeling as hard as flint, but he was touched at this evidence of self-forgetfulness in men who had lived only for pleasure and excitement. He held out his hand to each in turn, and they grasped it as if recording a solemn compact.

"Go, now," he said, "and say as little of this as possible to any one. You will be asked many questions. It will be enough to reply that we are all going back to the trial we anticipated before this, and are assured of acquittal. Above all, Hipponax must suspect nothing, or he would take you in his ship. And if you suffer hardships be grateful that we are far from Athens and have received this warning. Polystratus is in Athens!"

"And a fever prevented him from coming out! Are the names of the women mentioned, do you know?"

"No. Hipponax volunteered the particulars of the impeachment. Nemea is away, and all men hope for the favours of Theodoté, Rhodippe, and Damasandra! They are safe enough. I will go out with you. I have the pleasant duty of making my farewells to Nicias."

But Nicias felt no exultation when his troublesome young rival informed him in as few words as possible that he was summoned to Athens to stand his trial for profanation of the Mysteries. He well knew what that portended. He would have liked nothing better than to have Athens recall Alcibiades for any one of many reasons, but he was horrified at the thought of his untimely death.

"I am sorry—sorry," he faltered. "I thought they would await our return, and felt sure you could exonerate yourself. I hope you can do so in any case—it is quite possible they have accused unjustly. Antiphon is the best of the pleaders. He is your enemy, but all pleaders sell their wares——"

"I shall do my own pleading," interrupted Alcibiades haughtily. "I wish you good fortune, Nicias, and a safe return to Athens."

And he left the tent.

XI

THE *Achilles* dropped anchor in the harbour of Thurii at midnight, but the *Salaminian* remained outside. Alcibiades had announced to Hipponax that he would be obliged to lay up two days for repairs, and the commander was too much in awe of him to protest. He had been given strict orders to make no arrest if it could be avoided, and only violence could restrain Alcibiades if he chose to linger in every harbour on the way to Athens. After all he was still a Strategos and it would be a brave commander who would venture to argue with him.

To Alcibiades' surprise they were not challenged at the docks, nor at the gates of the city. He gave his name to the watch and he and his companions were admitted immediately.

"Ask this man to give you a permit to leave by

another gate and proper directions," was whispered in his ear. "Go out into the country at once. You must not be found in the city to-morrow. I expect a friend to meet me here."

He felt his arm grasped and saw that a tall man stood beside him. It was too dark to distinguish his features, but he asked no questions as they walked rapidly up the broad street. After a few moments his guide paused and lit a lantern he carried. He raised it above his head and revealed a close-fitting cap and long, oval eyes.

Alcibiades recoiled in amazement. "Set——" he gasped. "No!—but it cannot be——"

"It cannot be Tiy? And why not? It would be strange indeed if I were not here. Thank the gods you received Young Pericles' letter. These have been days of terrible anxiety, for I could not be sure that the man to whom we entrusted it would be faithful, although he was heavily bribed."

Alcibiades threw his arm over her shoulder, a habit he had with his familiars among men. "I am not surprised now," he said. "I only wonder I did not expect it. Where can I hide in Thurii—*hide!* Gods!"

"We go to the house of Herodotus. I knew him as a child, when he visited Egypt, for he was our guest. He consented at once to offer you his hospitality. No one would think of looking for you there, even were that contemplated."

They hurried down one broad street after another, and Alcibiades' thoughts, so long painfully focused, began to fly about inconsequently. He remembered all the talk, when he was a boy, of the great city, Hipponicus, the famous architect of the Piræus and the friend of Pericles, left Athens to build. Zosmé, his wife, had sometimes brought him sweets, and that dark vivacious woman had more than once threatened him with a spanking when he had mauled her precious Archeptolemus. And now he was a fugitive in this

same beautiful city! And Archeptolemus had turned Oligarch. They had not spoken for two years. . . .

"We are here," said Tiy.

They had stopped before a large house and the porter was opening the doors. He led them across the court to the pastas, a spacious room, not a mere alcove, lit the lamps, then left them, drawing the curtains behind him.

Alcibiades threw himself into a deep Thessalian chair. "A pleasant refuge," he said grimly. "But will not Hipponax ask the authorities to have every house in Thurii searched for me—for Zeus' sake take off that cap!"

Tiy smiled for the first time and shook down her hair. The dark mass rolled over her shoulders to her knees, a strange contrast to her high boots and short belted tunic, which gave her the figure of a fine upstanding man. There was a dagger in her belt and she took it out and laid it on the table.

"The man at the gate also was bribed, but if he had failed me——" She glanced at the weapon with dark significance.

Alcibiades looked at her with wondering admiration. "What a woman you are, Tiy!" he exclaimed. "But you haven't answered my question."

"Hipponax will not be admitted to the city. The gatekeeper will swear that no one entered to-night, and the Thurians have no love for the Athenians. You are safe here for as long as you care to stay."

"That will not be long. I have made my plans."

His face was set in hard lines, and she looked at him with a pang. Nothing could impair his beauty, but it had lost its radiance. He looked older, and more grim and determined than she had ever seen him. If there were any of the old boyish gaiety left in him it was buried deep under calamity and only the gods knew what dark schemes for the future. But his pride and his arrogance were as manifest as ever.

"Now tell me," he said sharply. "I want to know just what happened in Athens. I asked Hipponax no questions. As far as he knows I received his announcement with indifference and no curiosity. What started them off again?"

Tiy seated herself in another deep chair, and relaxed as if she too had been under a long strain. "Do not forget that their excitement over the Hermæ was merely suspended by the sailing of the fleet. The investigation began again at once and the reward was raised to ten thousand drachmæ. A Metic named Teucrus had fled to Megara. He sent word to the Council that he had been a party to the profanation of the Mysteries, and had some knowledge of the mutilation. Immunity was granted of course, and he came before the Council and Ecclesia and deposed that he had taken part in a parody of the Mysteries in your house. He mentioned the names not only of Alcibiades, Meletus, Theodorus and Polytion, but of Polystratus and six others. Polystratus and two others fled the city that night and four were cast into prison. Then a cousin of yours, Agariste, a woman of great wealth, and a beauty, I am told, went before the Council and denounced you as having taken part in another profanation in the house of Charmides."

"Ah!" said Alcibiades. "Ah!"

"Was she another of your Nemeas?" asked Tiy with some irony.

"Were women permitted to act in the Theatre of Dionysus she would do admirably as one of the furies in the *Orestes*." He had almost forgotten his intrigue with his handsome flame-haired cousin, but it was patent that she had not. He recalled that she had threatened him with her vengeance for his swift recovery, but he was so accustomed to threats of that sort that he never gave them a second thought. Women!

"Well, what did she have to say?" he asked.

"There was something of the kind at Charmides' house one night, but a tame affair beside the one you witnessed at Nemea's. It was hardly begun before it was over, for I thought of something more novel. I remembered we were all very hilarious and celebrating Charmides' improved fortunes. His father, who had been ruined by the war, made money from his quarry on Pentelicus as soon as I began to build. Whom did she accuse else? I haven't the least remembrance of who was there that night."

"Only two of the names were those of men I know: Adaimantus and Axiochus——"

"What?" Alcibiades sat up, an expression of acute anxiety on his face. "Is he in prison? Has he fled? What of my son?"

"He was warned before the impeachment and came to see me for a moment before he left the city. He went to relatives on Naxos. Why Charmides did not flee I do not know. Your son is safe with Sostrata. They have said nothing so far of confiscating your cousin's estates, but should that happen she will go to the house of her father with her family."

Alcibiades sank back with a sigh of relief. "What did this Metic tool have to say about the Hermæ?"

"It transpired that he knew little after all. He mentioned the names of Euphiletus and Meletus, but when questioned more closely, was not ready to swear to exact knowledge. He was equally vague about several others, who are with the fleet. Your enemies, when instructing him, had forgotten to be specific about the major offence.

"The disappointment of the Athenians was terrible. They had hoped to bring the miscreants to justice then and there, and were far less interested at the moment in the Mysteries than in propitiating an offended Hermes. They were in agonies of apprehension, and they wandered about the streets looking distracted. I could see them wringing their hands in the Agora;

and the imprecations in the Ecclesia of the two commissioners, Peisander and Charikles, were something to listen to! They ranted that the design of the Hermokopids was to put down the democracy, turn freemen into slaves, and what not; further inflaming the Athenians, of course.

"Then came forward another informant—one Diokleides. His story was startling enough. He was abroad, he said, on the night of the mutilation, for he was on his way to Laurion to receive payment for a slave hired to the mines. There was a half-moon, you may remember. He called it a full moon, but no one thought of investigating at the time. He was astonished to see a large number of men, about three hundred, leave the Odeon and stand talking in groups. He concealed himself behind a pillar, and recognized many of them. After a time they dispersed and he continued his journey. The next morning he heard of the outrage, and happening across one of the men he had seen the night before, told him of his evidence. As he had no desire to incur the hatred of any of them, he said, he would agree to keep quiet if sufficiently compensated. He was asked to come next day to the house of Leogoras the father of Andokides——"

"Aha!" Alcibiades sat up again. "Andokides. I thought as much."

"He testified that a number of other young men were at that house and they offered him twelve thousand drachmæ to keep his counsel. But for some reason incomprehensible to himself the money was not paid, and at last he made up his mind to go to the Council and demand the reward. He denounced forty-two men, including Andokides and his father, Charmides, Critias, a brother of Nicias, and two members of the Council sitting before him.

"You may imagine the sensation. The other members wanted to put their colleagues to the torture then and there, in the hope of extracting further

information, but the accused cast themselves on the altar and made such a vehement demand to be tried before the dicastery, the right of every free citizen, that they were permitted to depart after friends had offered surety for them. They went straight to their stables, mounted horses, and fled from the city.

"Forty men were cast into prison. They might be all there yet, or executed, had not Charmides, who apparently knew more than he had told, implored Andokides without ceasing to save them all by giving the names of the real offenders, and finally prevailed.

"You did not notice when peering at all those hundreds of Hermæ that morning, that the one before the house of Andokides had escaped. That was one of the strongest counts against him. It seems that the deed was conceived in his house, but after he had broken his collar bone and injured his foot by a fall from a horse.

"When he went before the Council he deposed that he had repudiated the suggestion of his friends as abominable, but they would not listen to him, and started out that night, leaving him to mutilate his own Herm. He demanded that his slaves be put to the torture to obtain evidence that he was ill in his house. That, I believe, was done."

"Like him! Whom did he denounce?"

"Euphiletus, as the author of the enormity; Meletus, and twenty-two others, some of whom managed to escape. (He said there were many more but he did not know their names.) The others were put to death. So was the man Diokleides. When the Council, wishing to reconcile these conflicting lists, questioned him again, he broke down and confessed that he had been bribed to give false evidence by two men whose names he did not know. Those who had been in prison with Andokides were released and Charmides disappeared instantly. Critias, of course, was exonerated. But whether Andokides lied to save

himself and the several members of his family who were accused with him, and sent innocent men to their death, is a question that has been discussed in my house at least. They took his word because he is a member of a great family, the son of a man of influence, and a popular orator ; and when that other wretch made his confession, and some one recalled the lunar conditions of that night, it seemed to the Council there could be no further doubt of Andokides' word. But no man has spoken to him since, and he has gone into voluntary exile."

" A good riddance. One less liar in Athens. But I suppose he had been active in doing me what harm he could long before that ? "

" Yes ; but if something had not happened to terrify the Athenians almost immediately after his confession they might have dropped the question of the Mysteries for a time at least, so relieved were they at bringing so many of the Hermokopids to justice. News came that a Bœotian force was assembled on the borders of Attica. At once the report was circulated that they were in league with the many still unidentified Hermokopids, whose aim was to take possession of the city. All the citizens were put under arms, gathering in the Agora, the Temple of Hephæstus, the Agora of Hipponicus at Piræus—every man watching another ! The Council remained all night on the Acropolis except the Prytanies who sat up in the Tholos. Sentries paced the walls. Then came the news that a Lacedæmonian army was at the Isthmus of Corinth, on its way, no doubt, to join the Bœotians. More excitement.

" Nothing came of all this, but your enemies, headed by Androcles, made the most of it. (I think the only reason that your name was not on Andokides' list was because he was too well known as your enemy, and felt it would be wise to leave you in the capable hands of Androcles.) Well—your insult to the Mysteries was

part of a deep-laid scheme to 'corrupt your friends and seduce their minds into holding government as well as gods in contempt.' You had 'entered into an understanding with the Bœotians before you left.' 'The city was on the edge of a volcano.' Its 'liberties were threatened.' And every man suspected his neighbour.

"As if that were not enough the Hierophant of Eleusis came to Athens and demanded that all who had been concerned in the defamation of the Mysteries, and Alcibiades in particular, be brought to justice without further delay. Dire vengeance would be visited upon all Initiates by Demeter and Kora were that insult unavenged. All the great families, whose members hold the sacred offices at Eleusis by hereditary right, caught the excitement and demanded an instant trial. Whether they were put up to it by your enemies, or whether your enemies made the most of this powerful support I do not know, but I suspect the former. At all events when the moment was ripe, Thessalus stood on the Bema and made his formal impeachment. The Athenians by this time were in a state of mind to believe anything about any one, and they seemed to remember naught but the worst that had ever been said of you—dinned into their ears for over two months. The *Salaminian* was dispatched to Sicily."

XII

"AND here I am!" Alcibiades sprang to his feet and strode up and down. Tiy looked at him anxiously but with a certain pleasure. He was dressed much like herself, and the uniform became his tall soldierly figure even more than the mantle, which he disposed with a peculiar grace he had learned from Pericles. He had taken off his helmet, and once or twice he ran his hands through his hair, tugging at the roots.

He picked up the dagger and examined it. "Egyptian,

is it not ? " he asked, as if he had no other thought in his mind. " A little pyramid, and something that looks like a river——"

" Yes, it has long been in my family—— Alas, my scarab brought you no good fortune, Alcibiades ! "

" Well, the end is not yet. You will let me have it a little longer ? After all, matters might be worse ! If I had received no warning, and been offered no haven, I should be on my way to Athens."

" Keep it, of course. . . . But will you not tell me your plans ? "

" Yes—to-morrow. But I would sleep now. I have had little of late."

She lifted a lamp at once and led him across the court to a room whose size astonished him. " Only the thalamos would be as large in Athens," he said.

" Ah, but this is Thurii. The city was laid out on the grand scale and the houses are proportionate. A slave will attend you in the morning."

She closed the door behind her. Alcibiades threw off his clothes, and had hardly disposed himself in the broad comfortable bed before he was sound asleep.

He was awakened late by a light touch on his shoulder and looked up to see a familiar face bending over him.

" Saon ! By all the gods ? Where did you come from ? " He sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes, wondering if he had not passed through a long nightmare and were safe in his own room at home.

" I came with the Lady Tiy, O Master. She and Pericles the Younger thought it best, and I was glad to come, for you know little of taking care of yourself——"

" I have taken care of myself for months on end in times of war," interrupted Alcibiades, who always bristled at criticism.

" True, O Master, but you ever came home in rags, and your hair improperly cut. The bath is ready. I have brought the bread and wine, as the breakfast hour

has passed long since. I brought some part of your wardrobe with me, but not as many himatia as I would have liked, for we stole out from Athens on foot and at night, and took horses at the Dipylon Gate to the Bay of Kyllene, where we embarked. But I took them to the fuller here to be pressed."

"Very well, I'll wear a chiton to-day, but send my uniform to the fuller at once. I'll have more need of that in the future. And thank the gods for a decent bath."

An hour later, feeling fresher than since he had left Athens and wearing a dark-green chiton, he entered the aula and saw Herodotus sitting alone by the altar. He had remembered him vaguely as a small man already wrinkled, who had seemed very old to a little boy. He was more weazened now than wrinkled but his eyes were very bright.

"Welcome, Alcibiades," he said cordially. "It is a pleasure to receive you in my house, and I beg you will remain here as long as it pleases you."

Alcibiades thanked him warmly, and became charming at once. It was an irresistible instinct with him to fascinate a stranger, and he forgot his trouble for the moment in replying with lively emphasis to the old historian's rapid questions about Athens.

"And tell me of Sophocles," said Herodotus eagerly. "He was the best of my friends, and Zeus knows how many years it is since I have seen him. I have only returned to Athens once, and then he was away. He visited me here but once, and that long ago, for he loves Athens more than his old friend."

"He has been a Strategos several times, although he likes nothing less. He prefers to write plays and spend his mornings with Aspasia. He has taken many prizes in the Dionysia."

"He sends me his plays as soon as they are published, and I have had several performed in our beautiful theatre here." The Thurian's accent of pride

was for both his friend and his city. "I sometimes think of going to Athens, but I am too old to cross the sea. And I was always terribly sea-sick!"

He indulged in many reminiscences and asked many questions, but made no allusion to the delicate circumstances of his guest. Alcibiades, deeply as he appreciated his reticence, was beginning to grow restive, when Tiy appeared and told the old gentleman that his son Panyasis was at the door to take him for a walk.

With him went the hour's semi-oblivion, and Alcibiades and Tiy sat for some moments in silence regarding each other soberly.

"Will you stay here for a time?" she asked at length.

"Only until Hipponax tires of waiting for me and is seen sailing to the south. I shall lose no time taking my revenge on the Athenians." And such an expression of hatred distorted his face that she was startled.

"But—how can you? They deserve it—but what can you do?"

"I shall go to Sparta and offer my services—and give them advice they will listen to. The Syracusans are children in war. They need a Spartan General to teach them how to defeat this armament that now terrifies them. I shall also persuade them to invade Attica once more."

"That is a terrible revenge," she said thoughtfully. "But they deserve it. And then you will rise on her ruins, I suppose?"

"I have learned not to make plans too far ahead! But if the opportunity occurs—— My thought now is to make Athens understand that Alcibiades is greater than she."

"They will call you a renegade—a traitor. You won't like that."

"No, not even the Athenians will say that. I am

virtually an exile, and an exile has no country. He is permitted to adopt any he chooses, and if he fights his own, that is but an incident in the game of destiny. Were I captured I might be given the cup for profaning the Mysteries, but not for shedding their blood on the battlefield."

"The Greeks are a reasonable people when unexcited! Will you tell me your immediate plans? You hardly can go to Sparta without negotiations."

"How did you come here from Kyllene?"

"I caught a merchant-vessel. The captain has promised to wait for me—and start as soon as I demand it."

"Very well, we will go to Kyllene, and thence to Argos, where I have relatives and friends. There I shall open negotiations with the Spartans."

"We," she said musingly. "Do you expect me to go with you?"

"Yes—yes! You must not leave me again, Tiy. It is a strange thing for Alcibiades to say, but you give me something—what is it? I don't like to admit it is strength. No man should draw strength from a woman, even from a Tiy. But with you beside me I could face Zeus himself. The gods only know what the future holds—what my wanderings may be. I may be obliged to flee to Thrace, where I have a property, and many friends among that wild people. There may be hardships, but you are as strong as any man——" And his hard eyes melted as he looked at her appealingly.

"I should like nothing better," she said brusquely. "Life in Athens may be exciting for Athenians, but it was growing monotonous for me. If dispatches can be got through to Persia I shall manage to satisfy them. But I must accompany you as a man. I am not the woman to submit to silly or lascivious gossip."

"Naturally. When we are in the house of my friends it may be necessary to take them into our

confidence ; but you will have little difficulty in passing yourself off as a man ! Perhaps it would be wise to cut your hair. Your cap might come off——"

"No ! I'll not cut my hair, not even for you." And she looked at him indignantly.

"I believe that is your one feminine vanity," he said teasingly.

"I am no more vain of my fine hair than you are of your bronze curls. Vanity has no sex. I keep my hair."

He laughed, but his light mood was fleeting. "You will have the *Salaminian* watched ? " he asked.

"I'll ask Panyasis to keep a slave on the roof. Let us go up there now.

It was a large house of two stories and he had a fine view of the city and harbour. A superb white city of fair size with brilliant colour on the temples and public buildings. The theatre was not as large as others he had seen but of perfect proportions. There were shady trees everywhere, and the birds were singing lustily. Beyond the walls were farms and to the south a dense forest. Somewhere in its depths were his three friends. He sent them a brief thought, and hoped they had disregarded his advice and kept together.

The *Salaminian* was riding at anchor. Hipponax was tranquil as yet, but to-morrow or next day there would be turmoil at the gates !

BOOK IV

BOOK IV

I

THE moon flooded the Argive plain with silver as they rode in at midnight near Mycenæ. They had had a long hard ride and it was very cold.

"There are tombs hereabouts," said Alcibiades. "We had better take refuge in one of them. It is many stadia yet to Argos, and the gates will be shut. It is best we slip into the city quietly in the morning."

"But—tombs," said Tiy doubtfully.

"They are not like your pyramids. Each is built into a hill, and should be warm and not too uncomfortable. If the dead ever slept there they have disappeared long since. I amused myself exploring them when I was so often detained in Argos. I doubt if there is an inn in Mycenæ, and we have avoided inns so far. But we must rest."

Tiy slipped off her horse gratefully and gave the rein to Saon. Alcibiades also dismounted, and after casting his eyes about, led the way to a low hill.

"Some have been opened and some not," he said. "But I think this will accommodate us."

Saon tethered the horses and followed them down a narrow stone passage to a door in the hillside. It opened to a hard push, they lit their lanterns and stepped into a circular room hollowed out of the hill in the shape of an enormous bee-hive. The floor was earthen but sufficiently clean.

"There are said to have been rows upon rows of golden rosettes on these walls in the time of Agamemnon or later," said Alcibiades, "but these tombs were

despoiled by the ancient Argives. Only one or two of those rosettes were left to tell the tale."

He opened a low door and revealed a small inner chamber. "Here is where the kings—or queens—were supposed to lie in state," he said, smiling. "Tiy will have fitting company should their ghosts return to haunt it."

"Tiy is too sleepy to think of ghosts." And she wrapped herself in her mantle forthwith and lay down on the hard ground, a couch to which she had grown accustomed during their long journey from Kyllene.

Alcibiades closed the door, and he and Saon were soon as soundly asleep as Tiy.

As they were riding toward Argos next morning, Alcibiades, while telling Tiy something of the grandiose history of the valley, was subtly aware that some part of his personal accoutrement was missing. Finally, during a pause, he concentrated his thoughts on the subject, and then wheeled suddenly and rode back to Saon.

"My scarab!" he exclaimed. "I feel it is not on the chain. Go back to the tomb and look for it."

"It may be under your tunic, O Master," suggested Saon, who was very hungry.

Alcibiades dismounted, ran his hand under his tunic and over his undergarment, and then shook himself. "No," he said. "It is not here. Go at once."

He rode back to Tiy, who was gazing at the lofty ruins of Tiryns. He had told her of the fancies he had indulged in before it one night. Like as not, some woman of her blood had reigned there. . . .

The blue waters of the bay were sparkling in the sun. Impossible to feel anxious on a morning like this and surrounded by beauty both austere and enchanting. The hard mountains were delicately coloured and the valley shimmered with the silver of olive groves, vineyards were heavy with purple

fruit. The goat-herds piped to their flocks, and the birds sang in the trees. . . . Alcibiades had been shocked into the knowledge that he could not have his way in all things, that the gods had frowns for him as for lesser mortals; but it had merely hardened his fibre for the next tussle with fortune. There were many adventures ahead!

"What is it?" she asked as he rejoined her. "Have you lost something?"

"Nothing much," he said evasively. "Saon will find it."

But she was not curious and began to talk of Agamemnon. They rode into Argos unremarked, for many were entering and leaving the city. Alcibiades had exchanged his helmet for a broad hat, and Tiy wore one over her cap.

At the house of Calliteles he received a warm if astonished welcome.

"I come this time as a fugitive, not with messages of goodwill from Athens," he said grimly. "Take me where we shall not be interrupted, for I have much to say to you. I will tell you of my companion later."

Calliteles looked curiously at the singular-looking man with the ivory skin and strange eyes like black jewels, but no suspicion crossed his mind and he led them to his office.

He had heard much of what Alcibiades had to tell, for the Athenians had abruptly sent home the Oligarchs who had taken refuge in their city, in the singular belief they were in league with Alcibiades; their escort had told of the reign of terror in Athens. But he listened with ejaculatory interest to the story of his famous young relative's escape, and flight from Thurii. It was then that Alcibiades related Tiy's part in his adventures, and something of her history.

Calliteles looked at her in amazement. "A woman!" he exclaimed; and no less than three

times. "But of course I know of the Egyptian women, although I never expected to see one. I am honoured to have you in my house, O Tiy, and you will be glad to go to the women's quarters." Lucky Alcibiades, to have her for a friend, or whatever she is, he thought. I'd not care to have her for an enemy. She'd not hesitate to use that dagger, and could break any man's neck.

He was a large man himself and had fought on many battlefields in his youth, but his big handsome face wore an expression of awe as he led her through his house. Tiy strode beside him, willing to find a bath and change of raiment, but filled with no enthusiasm at the thought of spending her time in Argos with women. And her reception by the lady of the house was doubtful.

Calliteles' wife Xenylla, however, was his second, and little older than herself. She was thrilled and excited at the briefly told story, and offered voluble hospitality. Nothing in her wardrobe would fit this tall woman, but she set her slaves to work at once to make chiton and mantle, and by luncheon Tiy was properly arrayed.

II

Saon could not find the scarab, although he was sent back five times. It had fallen into a crack: to be found long after, and repose in a museum as the possession of some old occupant of the tomb who had had commerce with Egypt.

Alcibiades was seriously disturbed, not only because it was Tiy's and it would be something of an ordeal to tell her of its loss, but he had come to regard it as a talisman. Then he reflected angrily that he was becoming as superstitious as Nicias, and put it out of his mind.

He told nothing of his plans to Calliteles, who

accepted his claim on family hospitality as no more than natural, and instructed his household to make no mention of his guests when abroad.

Alcibiades wrote to Cleotes, the youngest of the Spartan prisoners who had lived in his house and the one with whom he had been most intimate when in Athens himself. He stated his position frankly, and asked him to put the matter before the ephors. If he received a formal invitation he would go to Sparta and give his services to the state, but nothing less would suffice. He was not seeking an asylum. More than one had been offered him, and he was safe and comfortable where he was. He would enter Lacedæmonia as no fugitive, but as one whom the Spartans would welcome to their counsels.

Saon found the messenger, but it would be many days before an answer could be expected from Sparta, and meanwhile he refused to lie hidden, and amused himself as best he could with old friends in the town.

But with none of his old thoughtless gaiety. His dark purpose never slept for a moment, and his boon companions found him sadly changed. The hetæræ were deeply disappointed in him.

He walked on the plain daily with Tiy—clad in her uniform—and he discussed with her his retributive designs. She made no attempt to dissuade him, for she knew it would be useless; but ruthless as her own nature was, she never lost her balance of justice, and she abominated war as both brutal and stupid. It would surely be enough to kill his enemies or avenge himself on them otherwise; why pull down a whole state, burying the innocent with the guilty in its ruins? Alcibiades had once prided himself on being both just and reasonable, and his natural gaiety and lightheartedness had saved him from vindictiveness (save possibly in the case of Sparta), but the shock of disaster had been too abrupt. His pride had been galled and his great ambitions thwarted. The head of the Athe-

nian State yesterday and an outcast to-day! No wonder there was fire in his head and a stone in his breast.

She therefore discussed his programme with him calmly, merely advising him to make no new enemies in Sparta, that state of enemies, and never forget that no matter how flattering the treatment afforded, he was still there on sufferance. Deferential he could be to no man, but he promised to curb his arrogance.

There was interchange of more than one letter between Alcibiades and Sparta, and it was late autumn before he finally received an official and unconditional invitation to come to that wary city and give it the benefit of his counsel.

While he was making his preparations for departure a messenger rode into the town and dismounted at the house of Calliteles. He was shown into the presence of Alcibiades, who recognized him as a man he had employed more than once.

"Do you bring me a summons from the Council?" he asked, smiling.

"No, O Alcibiades. They know they have no jurisdiction over you here. I have been sent to tell you that you have been formally condemned to death and your property confiscated."

"Very well," said Alcibiades, throwing him a gold coin. "You have delivered your message. Now return to Athens and tell them I shall show them I am still alive."

They set out on a bright cold morning, leaving Calliteles under the impression they went on a visit to friends in Mantinea. As there were rough mountain roads to traverse Saon had procured a guide.

Even Alcibiades was influenced by the freshness of the morning and the beauty of the bay tinted with delicate colours by the rising sun, the lofty splendour of the mountains sloping to the shore. The way lay along the coast as far as the village of Astos, where

they turned inland, and the road, level for a time, ascended gradually to the ruins of Thyrea on the Lacedæmonian frontier, destroyed by the Athenians in the eighth year of the war. Alcibiades had been a hoplite in that raid and he gave Tiy a realistic description of the razing of the city with its fine walls and towers. There had been no massacre, and the inhabitants had fled through the mountain passes unpursued. The Athenians were never cruel save from motives of policy, and rarely then.

They met no one but an occasional goat-herd or muleteer. The high points of the great mountain range glittered with snow, and they wrapped themselves warmly in their thick woollen mantles, riding briskly wherever possible. They crossed turbulent streams, exquisite glades, and passed through forests of fir and pine. The weather was too cold for camping and they made the best of a charcoal-burner's hut at night.

On the following day there was but one ascent, and two or three hours later they were crossing the river called Phonissa (the murderess), from its dangerous floods; crossing it not once but between fifty and sixty times, so twisting was its course. A sudden turn revealed the famous mountain Taygetos, rising to the south-west of Sparta, its crest white and dazzling.

They rode along the banks of the Eurotas, thickly shadowed with poplars, willows, and reeds, and approached the city as the sun was slanting to the high ridge of Taygetos. There were no gates, for there were no walls. The five straggling villages composing the city of Sparta, mean-looking save for the temples, relied on their vast rampart of mountains whose passes could be adequately defended. There the Lacedœmonians could have lived a pastoral life of peace and plenty, for their land was the most fertile in Hellas; but in spite of their aversion from speed

they were a military and conquering race, and the occupants of that handful of houses, looking as if built of dried mud, dominated the greater part of the Peloponnesus, and beyond.

There were traditions of the luxury and even splendour of ancient Sparta and her kings, but the city had been thrown down by earthquakes many times, and no trace of her palaces remained. For long now Sparta had been the seat of a stern and war-like people, trained from boyhood into a cast-iron endurance that no rigours of war could deplete.

The "palaces" of the two kings, Agis and Pleistoanax, last of the lines of the Agiadæ and the Eurypontidæ, two families that had reigned side by side since the Dorian conquest, were merely larger houses than those of their subjects. They lived as simply as the people, and although they were wealthy, as were many of the leading families, they took no personal advantage of it.

For these reasons as well as for their coarse ugly dress, their shaven upper lip that consorted ill with their full beards, their rough Dorian dialect, their often dishevelled appearance and rude manners, Alcibiades had always despised the Spartans. And now he was come to live in intimacy with them, eat their horrible food, sleep on their hard beds, wrangle with their stubborn minds, for Zeus knew how many years. He ground his teeth whenever he thought of it.

III

Cleotes, a man of his own age, with a rough shock of yellow hair worn long, keen blue eyes, and not an ounce of superfluous flesh on his powerful body, met them a mile from the city and gave them a reserved but sincere welcome. He was briefly made acquainted with Tiy's identity, and offered both the hospitality of his house.

"It is a poor thing beside yours, whose pleasant luxuries I well remember," he said ruefully. "But to such as I have you are more than welcome."

Alcibiades was never at loss for a gracious response, but the amenities were quickly over and they began to talk of the object of his visit. He was eagerly awaited and expected to speak in the Ecclesia on the morrow. Syracusan and Corinthian envoys were in the city, but so far they had made little impression on the ephors and Ecclesia.

As they rode into town Tiy understood why Cleotes had manifested no surprise at her height and manly appearance. It was the hour when the Spartans sauntered abroad, if such a word could be applied to those strong resolute-looking figures. Women, too, were in the streets, tall broad creatures, fair for the most part, and quite as stern of countenance as the men.

Alcibiades had told her that Spartan girls exercised in the gymnasium with the men and in a complete state of nudity. She could well believe it, and although she felt some slight affinity for women seemingly as independent as her own, she resented their hard faces and ungainly costume: a grey smock that exposed their powerful legs, from bare feet to quite an inch above the knee. Nevertheless they were handsome creatures, and might have been attractive if properly dressed, or if they had surrounded themselves with some measure of illusion. It was a far cry to the Nemeas!

She wondered why they had ever yielded even semi-dominance to the men. How long it was since women had ruled in Sparta she had no idea, for little was known of that secretive state, but she assumed that the sexes were now in the later stages of equality. Only the military character of the men, no doubt, and their frequent absences from home, had enabled the women to resist submergence for a longer period than usual.

And they looked quite capable of defending Sparta in the absence of the army !

Cleotes' house was in the centre of the city and they were the cynosure of many eyes as they rode through the streets. Alcibiades wore his helmet and Tiy her close cap. They were stopped several times and she was introduced as Setamon, a friend of Alcibiades, who had lived for some time in Athens and assisted in his escape.

There were no cheers, for the Spartans were not prone to demonstration, but he was stared at with much curiosity, and no hostility whatever. For an Athenian, condemned to death by his own degenerate state, to transfer his allegiance to the mighty Sparta, seemed to them the natural act of a man as able and ambitious as Alcibiades. Moreover his family had been bound to Sparta by many ties in the past, and no doubt he had remembered this when selecting her as the future theatre of his statesmanship.

Alcibiades felt the friendliness in the atmosphere, and it raised his spirits and reconciled him somewhat to their appearance. After all, he thought sardonically, he was the most adaptable of men, and would no doubt be soon one of them. At all events they were men. Not a weakling, nor even an undersized man was to be seen. The weak never survived childhood !

Even the little boys looked martial, and in one of the squares a miniature battle was going on. They were the chosen, pronounced by the elders worthy of inheriting the manhood of Sparta. Otherwise their small skeletons would be bleaching on the high slopes of Taygetos.

Alcibiades elevated his nose when he was shown into a cell on one side of the small ugly aula. It contained nothing but a hard narrow bed, and a wash-basin on a chest that looked as if made by one of the slaves. Then he shrugged his shoulders. The bed was no harder than the ground on which he had slept

for months at a time without complaint. And with the great purpose he had in mind, what mattered discomforts? At least the place was cleaner than he had expected.

There was only one court and not even a locked door to separate the women's quarters from the men's. Tiy's room was opposite Alcibiades', and she was accepted with neither rudeness nor enthusiasm by the impersonal Baucis, wife of Cleotes, whose Dorian speech was difficult of comprehension by ears attuned to the perfections of Attic Greek.

"You will do as pleases you," said this fine specimen of Spartan womanhood, whose shoulders were broader than Tiy's and whose hips far wider, for she had borne many children. "My husband says you will go forth as a man, but if you choose to be a woman in the house our helots know better than to speak of you abroad. We sup in an hour."

After that meal of black broth, bread and cheese, partaken with the women alone, for all the citizens of Sparta dined together in barracks, Tiy met Alcibiades at the door of the house and they went for a walk.

"I never compose my speeches until the last minute," he said, as they sauntered through the deserted moon-lit streets. "They lose their fire if pondered too long. Indeed I prefer to speak off-hand, stimulated by the moment. But the oration I am to make to-morrow before these Spartans requires more deliberation than any I have ever made to the Athenians, for their minds move so slowly it must be doubly emphatic—not to say exaggerated—if I am to convince them in one meeting. The envoys from Corinth and Syracuse have been here for several days begging for aid, and all they have accomplished is a promise to send an ambassador to Syracuse bidding them make terms with the Athenians.

"Nicias has dilly-dallied as usual. He should have laid siege to Syracuse long before this, and all he has

done is to defeat the Syracusans in a few skirmishes, and one battle which led to nothing. Therefore, when you hear my speech to-morrow—Cleotes will obtain permission to take you as Setamon, my distinguished Egyptian friend—do not open your eyes too wide at some of my statements. I might meet them and be disconcerted—or feel an irresistible desire to laugh."

Tiy laughed then and there. "I know you are an accomplished liar, dear Alcibiades! I assure you that nothing you say will astonish me."

"I hate lying," he said morosely. "That is the reason I'd like to be a monarch, with no need for subterfuges. I don't mean I hate it because it is condemned," he added with his customary frankness, "but because I would do as I please and say what I please always. But with an end to serve I stop at nothing. Are you comfortable in that pig-sty?"

"No, not comfortable—but content enough. I left Egypt, you remember, to seek change and variety, and this would be an interesting experience even were there nothing at stake. What a people! It seems incredible that they too are Hellenes."

"They are Dorians and we are Ionians. We have some Dorian blood in us, and that gives us our height and sometimes fair skin and hair. My family were Dorians—from Pylos—the gods only know how many hundred years ago. The Argives were Dorians originally, but have intermarried with other peoples. These people have rarely if ever sought wives outside their own fastness, and early bred out the peoples they found here—Phœnicians, Æolians, and others. They have made a great race of themselves, but O gods! not a brilliant one. I shall have to hammer their thick heads with the strongest arguments I can think of, expressed in the simplest language. By the way, old Thucydides is here. He never could endure me, probably because I gave so much trouble to his idol Pericles. If he puts me in his history, and he cannot leave me out—by

Zeus, no !—no doubt I shall be well spiced. Nor shall I condescend to placate him."

"Arrogance !"

"Do not confuse arrogance with pride, O Tiy," he said with a flash of his old gaiety. "I shall be sufficiently amiable and conciliatory to these Spartans, but as for that sour old Athenian exile, who did as much to lose us Amphipolis as any, let him do his worst. Later historians may understand me better."

"I suppose you are not daunted by to-morrow's ordeal ?" she asked him after a moment.

He stood still and stared at her. "I daunted—I—by *Spartans* ?" he cried incredulously.

"Well—you have been their most formidable enemy. You played a humiliating trick on those envoys, and insulted the one who preceded them. You have done all you could to break the Peace, and you are the author of this new war that must have caused them many anxious moments. They are haters of democracy and you have been its chief exponent. You will be in a curious position there on their Bema—but—well—it is only an Alcibiades who could carry it off. I do not underrate your powers !"

"You will find yourself justified to-morrow," he said drily. "And now we had best seek those hard beds. No doubt I shall feel like a Spartan in the morning !"

IV

THE snow on Mount Taygetos was crimson and the morning air sharp and bracing as Alcibiades looked over the men of the five demes of the City State of Sparta sitting on the ground in their meeting-place between the bridge of Babyka and the stream of Knakion. It was a monotonous sight, for every man wore his coarse grey cloak. The Corinthians and Syracusans, however, sitting opposite him below the rostrum, were

resplendent in scarlet, and he wore his helmet and dark-green uniform with its short belted tunic and the high metal greaves on his legs. Immediately in front were the thirty members of the council, the five ephors, and the two kings.

Every eye in that assembly was on him, and not all were friendly. He saw the grim visages of Endius, Laon, and Philocharidas, and the stern melancholy face of Thucydides, with its chiselled noble features and short curly grey beard. A fine head, he thought impartially, with a big brain in it. He might make a great historian, but nothing could alter the fact that he had been a deplorable General.

Tiy sat not far away with Cleotes. He flashed her a glance, but his own stern features did not relax for a second.

The envoys spoke first and renewed their pleas for a fleet full of hoplites to be sent to Syracuse to defeat the Athenians who would enthral them. But the Lacedæmonians for once were restless. They wanted to hear Alcibiades; even those who had good cause to hate him. Whatever else he might be he was always interesting.

The Corinthians and Syracusans cut short their orations, the President called the name they had all waited for, and Alcibiades mounted the platform. He stood for a moment regarding them calmly, and then he was swept by a wave of irresistible arrogance. For he knew he could do with these men as he wished. Their brains were no match for his.

He did not even take the trouble to make his tones conciliatory as he began the speech that was to shake Hellas to its foundations. He told them what he thought of them for refusing him the office of Proxenus which his ancestors had held so often in the past, and after the many favours he had conferred upon them; and for negotiating the Peace with his enemies, thereby conferring powers on them and dishonour upon himself.

They were rightly served when he turned to the Mantineans and the Eleans. Then after demonstrating their unreasonableness for condemning him as the leader of the Demos, a position he had inherited from a family not so much inclined to democracy as averse from despotism, remarking, however, that the follies of democracy were universally admitted, he threw them a sop with the statement that Athens could not afford to change her government with so strong an enemy as the Spartans but a few miles away.

And then he went on in a tone of cold menace to inform them that the Athenian fleet had sailed to Sicily intending in the first place to conquer every state on that island, then to proceed against the Hellenic cities in Italy, lastly to subdue the Carthaginian dominions, and finally Carthage itself. When those enterprises had succeeded "we meant finally to attack Peloponnesus, bringing with us the whole Hellenic power which we had gained abroad, besides many Barbarians whom we intended to hire—Iberians and the neighbouring tribes, esteemed to be the most war-like that now are. Of the timber which Italy supplies in such abundance we meant to build numerous triremes, and with them blockade Peloponnesus. At the same time making inroads with our infantry, we should have stormed some of your cities and invested others. Thus we hoped to crush you easily and rule over the Hellenic world."

He paused to let the awful peril that threatened them sink in. They sat in stony silence, but although some stared at him blankly as if stunned, other faces expressed anger, horror, fear, or grim sardonic determination. The ephors whispered among themselves. He went on with the same icy deliberation to prove to them that if they did not go to the rescue of Sicily their fate would be sealed.

"Therefore, remember, every one of you, that the safety, not of Sicily alone, but of the Peloponnesus is at

stake. *A Spartan commander I conceive to be even more indispensable than an army*; but his duty will be to organize the troops that are already enlisted, and to impress the unwilling into service. Thus you will inspire confidence in your friends and overcome the fears of the wavering."

Then his tones became fiery and emphatic as he urged them to make open war in Hellas itself, and prevent the Athenians from reinforcing their army. Above all they should fortify Decelea in Attica, something the Athenians had always dreaded. The whole stock of the country would then fall into their hands, the slaves of Laurion would desert to the invaders, thus depriving the Athenians of one of their principal sources of revenue. Above all, the customary tribute would cease to flow in, "for their allies, when they see that you are now carrying on the war in earnest, will not obey them."

An expression of fierce anticipation had routed all others in those faces silently upturned to him, and he went on with haughty confidence to inform them that they should not in fairness think worse of him for casting in his lot with the worst foes of the country he had formerly loved; nor suspect that he was speaking with the reckless passion of an exile. "An exile I am indeed; I have lost an ungrateful country, but I have not lost the power of doing you service. The true enemies of my country are not those who like you have injured her in open war, but those who have compelled her friends to become her enemies. The country I am attacking is no longer mine but a lost country I am seeking to regain. The true patriot is not he who, when unjustly exiled, abstains from attacking his country, but he who, in the warmth of his affection, seeks to regain her but without regard to the means." He then offered his services freely to Lacedæmonia, reminding them of the familiar saying, "The more harm I did you as an enemy, the more good I can do

you as a friend." Once more he admonished them of the immense importance of going to the rescue of the Sicilian states, and Syracuse in particular, and re-emphasized the dire consequences if they delayed. "You will save yourselves from annihilation, and overthrow the Athenian power once and for ever. And so henceforth you may dwell in safety yourselves and be leaders of all Hellas."

He left the Ecclesia immediately and went quickly to the house of Cleotes. To stand about and talk with this man and that would have weakened the impression he had made; a profound and agitating impression as he well knew. He had said what he had to say and if they made up their minds to accept his services, and desired his counsel, they must send for him. He would make no further advance.

They sent for him within the hour. Cleotes and other friends he had made at the mess the night before had hardly ceased congratulating him when he was summoned.

It was an assemblage strange to his Athenian eyes that awaited him in the Council House: the thirty men of the council, all men over sixty, and of the most aristocratic families; the five ephors, chosen by the people and the most powerful body in that oligarchical state; lastly, the two kings, who were members of the council. These with the Ecclesia ran the machinery of the constitution: a series of checks and counter-checks.

The kings had no administrative powers. They were the supreme commanders of the army whose word was law in the field. It was their privilege to declare war, but the king to go forth in command was elected in the Ecclesia. Otherwise they held certain priesthoods, offered the sacrifices monthly to Apollo, and those before battle. They presided at banquets, were given the hides of all slaughtered beasts, and a

great funeral at their death. Pleistoanax, a man prematurely aged from his long exile after selling out his country to Pericles, was a mere figurehead and rarely went to war. Agis, a man still young, and a superb specimen of his breed, was a General of high order and elected to lead all armies as a matter of course.

Ephors, council, and kings looked at Alcibiades with an expression of ill-concealed eagerness on their stern faces, but they put him through a long and rigid course of questions nevertheless. They wanted explicit details and all the information he was abundantly able to give them. Dinner was brought to the House, and they sat talking, questioning, and debating until far into the afternoon.

It was impossible to send out a fleet before the spring, as their own triremes, few in number, and those of the Corinthians were in no condition to venture upon the stormy seas of winter; but Alcibiades, beating down objection after objection of these cautious but deeply disturbed men, forced them to a decision to build more ships immediately and to send their General Gylippus out at the earliest possible moment. (Agis never went to sea.) The Corinthians with their superior fleet would be ready to sail at the same time, and meanwhile would be requested to dispatch two triremes at once to Asine on the Messanian Gulf, with men to build docks.

But they could be brought to no decision regarding the invasion of Attica. They were still nominally at peace with Athens, and as they had come to the conclusion, before the Peace of Nicias, that they had done wrong in precipitating the war, they were disposed to wait until the Athenians gave them a fresh excuse.

Alcibiades had not expected to accomplish his purpose in one sitting, and felt only relief at the last when he was able to retire from their presence and seek more congenial company.

V

Tiy found life with Baucis insufferable and Saon found her a house in a neighbouring street, bribing the elderly couple, whose children were married, to retire to their farm. It was a small house and little could be done with those rough floors and walls to make it attractive. Saon painted it white within, and found a couch and chairs for the room that would serve as andron. Carpets there were none, in the shops, at least, but he was a resourceful creature and he strewed the floor every morning with grasses. He was to live with her as her only servant, for Alcibiades knew that to indulge in the luxury of a personal attendant would create a bad impression, and Tiy, having concealed her sex in the household of Baucis, had no desire to take helots into her confidence.

She moved with the hearty concurrence of Alcibiades, who was delighted at the prospect of a pleasant refuge and hours of uninterrupted companionship.

Baucis made him a grey Spartan cloak and he wore it in public, but he kept a chiton at the house of Tiy, and the moment he closed that door behind him and put it on he had the sensation of changing his skin. When he was with the ephors or at mess he almost felt one with these Spartans and sometimes wondered grimly if the metamorphosis would be complete did he linger too long. Surroundings always affected him deeply, and he was soon as indifferent to coarse food and wine, the hard bed, and the lack of all the beauty and luxury that had made Athens dear to him, as when he had been in camp during the long cold winter before Amphipolis. There were no wild symposia, no conversations with sophists, no gay exchange of ideas with clever facile friends; nevertheless, it was impossible to be thrown with the Spartans intimately and not respect them. They might be a race of one idea, but they were a great one, and if they talked of nothing

but past wars and future that was by no means a subject uncongenial to him.

Nevertheless, he chafed at the delay and was often alarmed at the news that came from Sicily. After the battle near the Great Harbour of Syracuse, in which the Athenians had been victorious, Nicias, instead of following up his advantage, had gone into winter quarters, while the Syracusans had improved the opportunity to strengthen their fortifications and construct a new wall covering both the inner and the outer city. In the early spring, Nicias, no doubt prodded by Lamachus, roused himself, and, after a number of engagements, in which the Athenians were invariably successful, set his men to building forts on the hill behind Syracuse, and a wall of circumvallation that would cut off supplies from the outer world. The Syracusans, finding their troops, both in numbers and discipline, no match for the Athenian hoplites and cavalry, devoted their energies to building counter-walls. There were attempts on both sides to destroy these walls, and in an engagement with the Syracusan cavalry Lamachus was slain after his brilliant generalship had ensured the victory of his own troops. Meanwhile the Athenian fleet had established itself in the Great Harbour.

After the death of Lamachus Nicias fell into a pleasant languor. Secret correspondents in the city assured him it was on the point of surrender, and he neither pressed the siege nor hurried the completion of his wall.

All this news made its way slowly across the Ionian Sea. Not until two months after the death of Lamachus and the important defeat of the Syracusans, were these two incidents known in Corinth and transmitted to Sparta. The messengers were imperfectly informed as to other conditions, and reported that the Athenian wall of circumvallation was complete and the Syracusans invested on all sides, with no hope save in surrender.

At the beginning of summer the Lacedæmonian fleet and the Corinthian were still in harbour. The Spartans possessed no navy worthy of the name, even after the new ships were built, and they hesitated to send them out, for the Corinthians, for some reason best known to themselves, were in no hurry to move. Their navy, although a fine one, was inferior to the Athenian, and they possibly hesitated to put to sea, fearing to meet enemy reinforcements.

In vain Alcibiades had urged the ephors to overcome the reluctance of the Corinthians, with threats if necessary, and go to the rescue of the Syracusans before it was too late. Nicias might die at any moment, and with Lamachus in command the siege would be pressed ; the result with that fine soldier's tactics inevitable. But the Spartans hated hurry even more than they hated Athens and continued to parley with Corinth. Alcibiades in a burst of wrath told them he now understood their long partiality for Nicias ; he was of their breed, born by some mischance in Athens. But they merely smiled, for they had grown very fond of him.

When the news came of Lamachus' death Alcibiades was filled with alarm and themselves with satisfaction, for they as well as he believed that Nicias would now relinquish the siege and sail home ; but when they heard of the presence of the Athenian fleet in the Great Harbour, and the completion of the wall, the Spartans fell into consternation, and debated whether it would be worth while to dispatch a fleet at all. Alcibiades, however, got his way at last and persuaded them to send Gylippus to protect the Dorian cities in Italy. He had had many conversations with the obstinate grim General, and was convinced that once on the spot he would find a way to enter Syracuse, put heart in its people, discipline its troops, and take every advantage of Nicias' vacillating policy.

Gylippus accordingly sailed from Leukas, an island north-west of the Gulf of Corinth, the Corinthian navy

to follow later if advisable. He coasted along the southern shore of Italy, and hearing that the Athenian wall of circumvallation was far from complete, marched overland to Syracuse. Nicias knew of these "Spartan freebooters" and treated them with the contempt of an Athenian General with a hundred and thirty-four triremes at his disposal. Of Gylippus he had never heard, nor Alcibiades' advice to the Spartans to send, above all, an experienced General to the Syracusans. He made no effort whatever to oppose the progress of the Lacedæmonian, who was welcomed at Himera, and his small force of seven hundred hoplites augmented by one thousand more and one hundred horse; later by nearly the same number from Selinus and Gela.

Meanwhile, advised by Gylippus, the Corinthian General Gongylus with twelve triremes had effected an entrance to the Great Harbour under the very nose of the Athenians, who were all on shore, and almost as complacent as Nicias. The Syracusans, who had been on the point of surrender, relinquishing all thought of aid from without, heard at the same time of the approach of the Spartan General; and their despair winged away with the hopes of Nicias. Gylippus entered the city unhindered.

VI

The door of Tiy's house was open and Alcibiades entered noiselessly on his bare feet. A room on the left of the door was his, and here he took a bath, a luxury, as far as he could see, unknown in Sparta, and put on his chiton and sandals. Mirror there was none, but he combed and patted his curls with a practised hand, and then crossed the aula, little larger than a well, to the andron.

Tiy as a rule heard him enter and called a welcome, but the house was silent to-day and he wondered if she were out. The door of the andron too was open. He paused abruptly on the threshold. Tiy was there,

but, it was evident, so lost in thought as to be insensible of his presence, or of aught else.

She was sitting with one elbow on the table, the dark mass of her hair hanging, a hand supporting her head, her eyes fixed on the floor, the long flexible curves of her mouth compressed. But the hand that lay on her lap was as relaxed as her body.

The thick black lashes hid her eyes, but that their expression was brooding, their fires smouldering, could be inferred from her attitude alone.

The ugly passions and inexorable retributive purpose of this past year had not destroyed Alcibiades' quick sympathies nor his power of forgetting everything else in some enthralling interest of the moment. What a life this woman had led since she had left her luxurious house in Athens for his sake ! For a time there had been excitement and the spice of danger, but here in Sparta it had been an existence of deadly monotony, privations, and an utter absence of companionship save for his daily visits, often brief. There were no books to read, no singing girls to distract her, no household to manage. Long walks about the country were her sole amusement.

He hated the women of Sparta. Even if his partiality for blondes had not suffered a decline after the vengeance of two of them, he would have been glutted long since by these big sordid Dorian women. Their legs alone were enough. It had gratified him to throw several of them after fierce wrestling in the gymnasium.

Tiy had beautiful legs, beautiful arms, as finely modelled as his own if less muscular. She was fine altogether, that ivory jewelled goddess, notwithstanding her height and masculine attributes—and the last had been less and less in evidence for years now. And she was ever something of an enigma, in spite of their long intimacy. In some ways he knew her little better than when she had startled his vision that first night in Athens.

Why was she here, living the life of a recluse and a poor woman, unless she loved him ? She had never betrayed herself by a glance, but she was a woman of magnificent pride and iron composure. He remembered that Nemea had once told him of Rhodippe's belief that she had come to Athens for no less a purpose than to capture himself. But this he could hardly credit ; such a quest ill-accorded with what he knew of Egyptian women. . . . Even so, and had she loved him soon after, she must be a woman of infinite—formidable —patience. Six years ! Were it true that she loved him, and had lingered in Athens for no other reason . . . six years had she waited for time, intimate companionship, the irresistible attraction she had for him, whatever that was, to wear down his prejudices and do its final work ?

It must be. Why else was she here ? Her beautiful house in Athens awaited her, and many men whom she had found congenial enough. Or Egypt, where she could occupy herself with affairs of state, and grow in power and distinction. But she remained here in this hovel.

She moved slightly and looked up, disturbed by that powerful gaze.

" Ah, it is you," she said, but without rising, and her tones were even, although she coloured slightly. " I had been for a long walk, and am tired."

He crossed the room and stood over her.

" Do you love me, Tiy ? " he asked abruptly.

Then she rose and the flush covered every visible part of her. " No," she said. " Why do you ask me that, Alcibiades ? "

" Because—well—why shouldn't you ? We are everything to each other—or almost—that is——" Far more agitated than she, he felt he was not expressing himself felicitously. " Why—why are you here ? It is a wretched life for you, and there is little compensation. No man would do as much for me."

"Possibly not. But men love action and I do not. This situation interests me and so do you. To be the intimate friend and confidant of a man like you, to share your exile, and wonder what the next day will bring forth, is sufficiently exciting. Your vanity has led you astray, Alcibiades."

It was his turn to flush. "No—no—not that. I was never as vain as you think—I have had little enough to feed it of late! No—that is not it——"

She smiled slightly. "Well, put vanity out of the question. This would never have occurred to you in Athens. The women here disgust you, and I shine by contrast. You are trying to imagine yourself in love with me for want of something better. But I have no intention of becoming one in the long list of your hetæræ. We remain friends and nothing more."

"We could marry," he said eagerly, although his face turned redder still; he was aghast at her perspicacity. "Hippareté might as well be dead—or I could divorce her."

"No," she said sharply. "The rôle of husband became you as little as your other shifting rôles in women's lives——"

"But you are not Hippareté. What had we in common? A pretty ignorant child."

"You could have made her something more, for she had qualities that you discovered only after she hated you——"

"I don't want to talk of Hippareté," he interrupted angrily. "I had forgotten her existence. It is of you I am thinking. And there is no woman like you in the world."

"And yet you do not love me," she said calmly. "You are moved and excited because you found me looking tired and perhaps sad, and your lively imagination leaped to the conclusion that I was brooding on my hopeless love! But what you felt was the sympathetic understanding of one man toward another."

"No! No—I am sure that is not it." He stood staring at the floor for a moment, then spoke hesitatingly. "I think I love you, Tiy. How could it be otherwise? You mean more to me than any one. It has been so for six years. All other women have been toys. Not a day has passed when we have been in the same place that I have not sought you——"

"Reasons enough," she said dryly. "But when a man is in love he does not seek for reasons."

"What do you know about love?" And his eyes were sharp and piercing.

"Remember that I lived for five years in Athens—or four, if you will. Other cities were equally enlightening. I am not a fool, and I have seen as much of men as any of your hetæræ. I have had a number of them in love with me—more than you think—and men in love are very self-revealing. I do not recall they were driven to explain themselves, or that reason was conspicuous in their love-making."

"Curse them!" He swung on his heel and walked twice up and down the room, then stood before her again. "You haven't answered my question," he said. "Will you marry me?"

She shook her head, smiling, and he thought she had never looked so feminine. "No," she said. "No, I'll not marry you, Alcibiades. If you loved me—and I loved you—I should care little whether we could marry or not. You might be constant here in Sparta, but when you were once more surrounded by desirable women I should suffer the fate of many—oh, many!—that had gone before me." She drew herself up with an air of regal pride. "I am Tiy, a daughter of the Pharaohs, a woman of Egypt—they may stoop to men, those women, but not hang on their favours. I'll fill in no idle hour for an Alcibiades——"

Blue fires met black as he interrupted her roughly. "You mean you will yield me nothing until you are sure I love you. That is what you mean, Tiy. You

do love me. You would give me all I could ask were it not that you doubt me—Zeus knows you have reason! Why should any woman—you of all—believe in me? I make no pretence with you. But I do believe that if we were in Athens, and all well, I should perhaps at this very moment be asking you to marry me. What I have felt for women in the past was lust alone. Surely there must be something more. And you—you alone—can inspire it——"

"You are reasoning again. And from what I know of human nature lust is a part of love, far as it may be from being all. I think you desire me little, but find me preferable to the women that surround you, and also wish to make sure of me; you would find it hard to do without me now. But I have no intention of leaving you—I hear Saon in the kitchen, and lunch will be brought in presently. Let us forget this conversation and talk of other subjects in the future. I go to my room to put up my hair."

VII

SAON'S cooking was little better than Spartan, but he provided an abundance of vegetables and fruit, and if the former were indifferently spiced, they were tender, and his chickens if somewhat dry—for sauces were beyond him—were a welcome change from the daily ration in the mess of huge joints of meat or black broth and bread.

"Our palates will be ruined," said Alcibiades, after he had recovered from a fit of indignant sulks. "To say nothing of my table manners. This will be a nightmare to look back upon."

"You never think of joining the fleet?" asked Tiy, who had eaten in silence until it should please him to speak. "You love action. I wonder you are content to remain here."

"I was tempted to go out with the reinforcements,

but I dare not leave these dunderheads for a day. If I had not remained here this last year I doubt if those triremes would have been built, or any decision come to about Decelea. Even last summer, when the Lacedæmonians invaded Argos and the Athenians sent thirty triremes to their aid, and devastated Eastern Laconia—thus breaking the Treaty by an overt act—and they were willing to admit their tender consciences would now permit them to resume the war, I still had to talk for days before I could induce them to take any decisive step. Then to be sure they wrote to their allies and requisitioned workmen, implements, and materials for erecting a fort at Decelea, and drilling has been going on here every day since ; but it was only this morning I managed to pin Agis down to a promise that he would march five days hence. It was that I came to tell you—also that the ephors upon receiving certain news from Sicily sent for me to congratulate me on my foresight—not only that, but told me in so many words they would be guided by me henceforth without further protest. They almost apologized for their hesitations—these men who must hesitate to go to bed at night and get up in the morning."

Tiy was regarding him with interest. "What news ?" she asked. "You have heard nothing definite for some time now. Merely the building of walls and counter-walls."

"Gylippus has the Athenians walled in on the land side," he said grimly. "He has defeated them in two engagements, the last time severely. He has disciplined those raw island troops until they are a match for any, and won over important Sicilian states that had held aloof. The Corinthians are eager to emulate him, and Thebes and Thespiæ have sent contingents."

"And another great war on," said Tiy with a frown.

"Yes, greater perhaps than the last, although it may sooner be over."

"And if Athens had not cast you out and incurred this terrible enmity, Sparta would have done nothing—nor Corinth, waiting on Sparta."

"Nothing. Syracuse would have capitulated a year ago, long before Sparta could have been induced to move by envoys, and with little loss of life for the Athenians. Now they will never take Syracuse; neither Nicias nor Demosthenes, who is preparing to go out. If they are wise, those two, they will put their heads together and then sail home."

"'The lion's whelp,' as Ion of Chios called you in *The Sentinels*. What is the line? 'You should not keep a lion's whelp in your city, but if you do choose to keep him you must submit yourself to his behaviour.' They submitted long but not long enough! Forgetting that lions have claws with which to rend."

"They are madmen and fools," said Alcibiades angrily. "No man ever loved Athens more than I. I love every inch of Attic soil, and would have made her greater than ever before. Cursed superstition. That I of all men should be the victim of it! And what order of intelligence is it that takes account of what a lot of young fellows may do when they are full of wine? I would there were some country civilized enough to laugh at them."

Tiy looked at him with curiosity. "If you love every inch of Attic soil how can you bring yourself to contrive its devastation? How can you bear to think of Athens plunged in misery once more? I have heard terrible stories of those years when Attica was invaded yearly."

"Does not a surgeon cut off a man's arm to save the rest of his body from turning green and rotting? If I alone can ruin her, I alone can save her."

"You mean that when she is crushed and helpless you will enter with the Lacedæmonians at your back and rebuild? But she will hate you. She might forgive you for seeking another country, and even for

marching in its armies against her, but never for defeating her armament—if it comes to that—and spurring on the Lacedæmonians to devastate her lands once more——"

"I have had enough of her love in the past! I have too good reason to know what it amounts to. She should have proved her 'love' by sending me out in command of the fleet, and overlooking a drunken riot. By letting me triumph over my enemies, not thrown me to them. Let her hate me in the future, I care not. I'll make her great again in spite of herself."

If all goes well, thought Tiy, if all goes well.

Saon's meals induced no pleasant languor, and he pushed aside the table and walked up and down the room.

"And Nemea returned to Athens, no doubt!" he exclaimed with one of his abrupt transitions. "And is extracting money from Andokides—no, he is hiding somewhere. But there are many left. Have you heard again from Young Pericles?"

"Yes, but he never gossips of hetæræ. Saon went yesterday to Thyrea and found a letter in the hiding-place. I too have a piece of news. Critias is in Athens."

"What?" Alcibiades stood still and stared. "How is that?"

"He went with the letter that Nicias wrote demanding a heavy reinforcement, and sent some one out in his place."

"Having had enough of war under Nicias! I fancy a good many envy him."

"It seems that Nicias wrote an alarming letter. The ships are rotting and the crews out of practice. They might easily be defeated by sea as by land. Many have deserted, particularly among the allies. There is much illness among the soldiers, for the marshes breed fever. He told them they must either recall the fleet

or send another to its assistance. And he asked to be recalled himself, for he is too ill to remain longer."

Alcibiades had been listening intently, his brows drawn. "I knew only that he had sent for reinforcements and that Demosthenes was going out. And have they recalled him? The poor thing should be in bed in Athens, not sleeping in a tent by a marsh. Maddening as he is, it is impossible not to feel a certain sympathy for Nicias, for he is a sick man who would die on his feet if he thought it his duty."

"They force him to remain there. They seem to have a blind confidence in him."

"Fools! Fools! And they will go on being fools until they are ruined. Nicias against Gylippus! It will be a mercy if he is not annihilated before Demosthenes arrives."

For the moment he had forgotten he was his country's bitterest enemy, as his imagination pictured the wreck of that splendid armament which should have sailed back in triumph to Athens. Then he shook his shoulders. "What other news?" he asked. "How is my son? Who lives in my house—you asked that in your last?"

"Your son is well and has a good pædagogus and goes to school. No one lives in your house. It is closed and sealed and all your slaves have been sold. Pericles ventures the hope that if your son grows up into a good citizen the State will restore it to him."

Alcibiades laughed. "A long way ahead! I suppose he is going out with Demosthenes."

"Oh, yes, he is full of that."

"And he has offered no criticism of me yet?"

"No; in the five or six letters I have received he has only mentioned your name to send you his love and ask if you need money."

"I have so much need of money here! It seems to me now that we have enough for a lifetime. I go now to attend Agis at the sacrifice to Apollo. Zeus knows

when he will get to Attica, for he offers sacrifice every tenth stadion and turns back or sits down if the omens are unfavourable. If he gets there before autumn I shall be surprised. They know now that if they had taken my advice and established themselves in Decelea last year no reinforcements would have been sent to Syracuse."

She crossed the aula with him, and as they were about to part, the strange interview of the morning returned to his mind. She was looking animated and very handsome, and again he compared her with the Spartan women. But as if she read his thoughts, her eyes flashed. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, Tiy," he said with a slight smile. "I obey your orders—for the present."

VIII

Omens were favourable and Agis marched into Attica and fortified Decelea, a high town fifteen miles north of Athens between the mountains of Parnes and Pentelicus. The old systematic devastation began at once. Farms, olive orchards, vineyards were destroyed, houses razed, and Athens, as before, crowded with refugees. The slaves—thousands in number—of the mines at Laurion, whence came the silver that swelled the revenues of the State, deserted to the enemy as Alcibiades had predicted. If they had not done so in the former yearly invasions, it was because the enemy had remained during the summer only; but when they learned that the Spartans intended to occupy Decelea permanently they took revenge on their owners and taskmasters and flocked to the north.

In the early days of autumn news came over the Ionian Sea that was the occasion of a solemn festival of rejoicing in Sparta. Demosthenes, who had arrived at Syracuse with seventy-three triremes, five thousand

hoplites, and an immense number of light-armed troops, had endeavoured to capture the cross-wall by which the Athenians were hemmed in and cut off from land supplies. The attempt was made on a moonlight night, and after a brief engagement they were put to rout by the watchful Gylippus. Disorder became panic, and many threw away their shields and leaped over the cliffs. Over two thousand were slain.

Even then Demosthenes was unable to persuade Nicias to leave the marshy encampment while they still were in command of the sea and retire to Katana, until, when heavy reinforcements arrived from Peloponnesus and Bœotia, even he saw the folly of remaining longer. Everything was prepared and they were to slip out of the harbour at night, the enemy suspecting nothing, when the moon suffered an eclipse. The army shuddered. Nicias, as superstitious as the men, or more so, consulted his soothsayers. Their solemn verdict was they must wait either three days or until the next full moon.

The interval was devoted to religious rites, and meanwhile Gylippus learned of their intention to escape. He drew up his fleet of seventy-six ships in the harbour and forced eighty-six of the Athenian to give him battle. The sharp-prowed Athenian ships could not manœuvre even in that wide harbour against the snub-nosed Syracusan and Corinthian triremes; they were defeated, and the troops barely escaped to their fortifications on the north-west shore of the harbour. The Syracusans barricaded the harbour entrance, and then Nicias roused himself from a sick-bed and determined to break through, encouraging his disheartened men with all the vigour of his best years.

There was another fierce naval battle, and the Athenians were defeated even more disastrously. They made a desperate attempt to escape by land, Nicias leading the first division on foot, Demosthenes marching in the rear of the second to drive on the

worn-out and despairing men who had been forced to leave their sick and wounded comrades to the mercy of the enemy. The intention of the Generals was to go to Katana, and after scaling the wall they marched this way and that under the scorching sun, and blocked by the Syracusans at every turn. The division under Nicias outmarched the other, and that under Demosthenes, six thousand in number, was surrounded and forced to surrender. Demosthenes made terms for his men, whose lives were to be spared, but asked no mercy for himself. He attempted to take his life but was frustrated.

The miserable troops of Nicias, fainting with hunger and consumed with thirst, struggled on until they reached the river Asinanos. The enemy was on the opposite shore, but they fought one another to reach the water and were slaughtered as they drank.

Nicias surrendered. The butchery was stayed, the survivors made prisoners, both divisions were driven into the stone quarries of Achradina, "deep unroofed dungeons, open to the chills of night and the burning heat of day." Nicias and Demosthenes were tortured and put to death. Gylippus would have saved them, but the hatred and fury of the Syracusans were not to be restrained.

IX

Alcibiades, standing at the back of the Ecclesia, heard this red page of history with all its awful details, told by Gylippus himself, who had hastened to Kyllene on a fast-sailing ship and on relays of horse to Sparta.

He listened with impassive face, for he knew that many eyes would wander in his direction, but slipped away while they were still cheering, and walked blindly down the road to the city and through the streets until he turned suddenly into a doorway and found himself in the presence of Tiy.

She rose in alarm. "Alcibiades!" she exclaimed "What is it? What—what can it be?" She knew not alone by his face that something untoward had happened; never had he entered her presence in that Spartan cloak and with bare feet.

He staggered to the couch and threw himself face downward and burst into such terrible groaning that she would have believed him ill had not her sure instinct told her that here was agony of the spirit, not of the body.

She sat beside him and pressed her hand firmly on his shoulder, but she was too wise to speak or ask questions. When the groans ceased abruptly and he shook from head to foot with a chill, she fetched a glass of wine and, turning him over, lifted his head and forced him to drink.

He fell back, looking up at her with dull, terrified eyes, his face so drawn and ashen that she hardly recognized him.

"Now, tell me what has distraught you," she said calmly. "You have had ill news from Sicily—I heard them cheering. Something has happened to your countrymen that you never intended."

"That is it, that is it," he muttered. "I meant them to be defeated, but not butchered—not tortured—Oh, Zeus! The flower of Athens in those dungeons or slaughtered! Men who have revelled with me—my friends—my comrades in battle—and why torture those poor old Generals?"

He faltered out the dreadful story, and Tiy cursed men and war within but held her peace.

"Think no more of the dead," she said peremptorily. "They feel no longer. Remember that thousands of those men are still alive. They may be returned to Athens. Of what avail to torment them further?"

"The Syracusans hate the Athenians so insanely it has made fiends of them. Our men will be left there to rot. They may liberate the allies, but not

my countrymen. The best of Athens is wiped out. And I—Alcibiades—I——" He flung himself once more on his face.

"Yes, you conceived that war and you instigated the Spartans to avenge you," said Tiy inexorably. "But you are not to blame for the folly of the Athenians in putting the wrong man in command, nor for the folly and weakness of Nicias. Nor are you to blame for the wickedness of the Syracusans. Remember that if the Athenians had given you the command this would never have happened. The Syracusans would have made little resistance and no Gylippus would have been sent to captain them. You have your share of blame and you must accept it, but the Athenians are guiltier still. And Nicias is not to be forgiven in spite of his tragic end. There is no excuse for his criminal negligence. . . . And there is somewhat to console you. Critias is in Athens. Axiochus and others of your friends are safe in exile. Young Pericles' broken leg saved him from a worse fate. I go now to tell Saon to prepare the bath."

Alcibiades went to his room, and when he returned to the andron he looked more composed, but the healthy tints had not returned to his skin and his eyes were haggard. He would not sit down, but walked restlessly back and forth.

"I have killed many men," he burst out at length. "And without compunction, for what else is war? If I were a ruler I would give men the cup who menaced the State. But I have always abhorred cruelty. Critias has far more cruelty in him and is far more inflexible than I. It was his idea that the men of Melos should be put to the sword and the women sold into slavery unless the city yielded without resistance. I would not listen to him at first—that expedition was planned in my club—and few were on his side. But I finally came to the conclusion that it was a necessary policy, for Athens, so often humiliated in that long

war, must be feared again. She had lost allies and subject states; the others must be shown that she was as powerful and even more ruthless than of old. And I had Syracuse in mind even then. She, too, was an island, and if Sparta gave Melos no help, she could expect nothing better. And it was a policy that would have justified itself if I had gone out in command of that fleet. Those Syracusans were so terrified at the very sight of the armament they would have surrendered before the month was out—my mistake lay in not letting Lamachus have his way. But even later, when the ships were rotting, they would have surrendered to Nicias, had no one gone to the rescue. What a fate for all of us! And everything promised so fair!"

"Sometimes," said Tiy musingly, "I think that all history is written and that every man plays his part as directed."

Alcibiades laughed shortly. "A consoling belief! You have been reading Sophocles. 'Inexorable destiny descends.' But I am no puppet in the hands of Fate. Or gods, or whatever. I alone am responsible for my deeds and I answer to no one but Alcibiades. Some are black enough! I would undo them if I could—and I would that we could see into the future. Futile wish! I have prided myself on foresight and proved it—but I may set in train other dire events in the future. O Zeus! If you had not been here to-day I think I should have killed myself."

"No," she said. "You will never kill yourself, Alcibiades."

"You mean I am too selfish?" he asked gloomily.

"I mean that Alcibiades has no real belief that death will ever take him, whatever may be the fate of lesser mortals, and that he will not be the one to extinguish himself."

"It may be. You have your own way of sympathizing with a man, Tiy! It is like taking a dose of bitter

medicine with a very little honey in it, but the patient feels better afterward. I might not have killed myself if I could not have made my way blindly to your house, but I should have been like a madman before night, and betrayed myself to these Spartans, who would have despised me; they are as hard as their stone Apollo. O gods! Why are not the strongest of us strong enough? Why should not we be able to mould life to our will? But I have raved long enough. What is past is past. I shall put it out of my mind. It has been done before. How else would a man live through the whole of his life?"

X

Very little news that was cheering came from Sicily. The allied troops after seventy days of torment were released and sent home. A few of the captured Athenians found favour in the eyes of the Syracusans and were treated as favoured slaves. Others won indulgence from their taskmasters in the quarries because they could recite long passages from Euripides. A few escaped. But the majority died from exposure and disease.

Alcibiades, whenever he permitted himself to think of them at all, wondered if they died cursing him, him whom they had so loved and extravagantly admired, promising them as he did adventure and glory.

He occupied himself in daily consultations with the ephors, whom he had now reduced to such a condition of doglike devotion that the enemies he made asserted bitterly that nothing was done in Sparta without his consent. The news that came from Athens was also of consuming interest. Agis was master of all Attica without the walls. More than twenty thousand slaves, many of them valuable artisans, had deserted to him.

The sheep and cattle had all been destroyed. It was increasingly difficult to get provisions from Eubœa; they could not be brought past Decelea as of old, and were sent by sea, to be taken as often as not by the enemy's privateers.

Athens was now little better than a military post. Her citizens were on the walls night and day; the Long Walls to Piræus as well as those surrounding the city. The treasury, deprived of revenue from the mines and the farmers, was at a low ebb; the tax on allies and subject states had been raised, although Athens was in no position to enforce it. But in spite of her trials and critical situation, and the period of agony and dismay through which she had passed after the loss of two-thirds of her fleet and the best of her men, her energy had revived; she was building new triremes, economizing on her liturgic and choric ceremonies, and had appointed a Council of Ten to direct all expenditures.

If Alcibiades did not exult in the alarming condition of Athens—and the shock he had received had somewhat tempered his rabid hatred of his country—he felt no disposition to intervene in her favour. It was a part of the programme he had conceived and he was determined to carry it out.

But in spite of his activities in the state and the excitements of fast-coming news, time hung heavily on his hands. The most congenial friends he had made were with Agis in Attica, and Tiy had left him for only the gods knew how long. She had received a summons from the Satrap in Egypt, sent, as were all communications, through Young Pericles; and although Alcibiades had protested violently at first, he had agreed in the end that, for reasons the Satrap would hardly guess, it was best she should go.

Ironically, he was in high favour with the Great King, who gave him full credit for the Syracusan War, the destruction of the armament, and the in-

vasion of Attica, but he wanted to know more of his future plans, and Tiy was obliged to write very guardedly. The Satrap insisted upon a personal interview, and as he could not go to her, she must perforce come to him. She had therefore set out with Saon under a safe-conduct for Corinth, where she caught a merchant-vessel for Egypt.

Agis paid a brief business visit to Sparta, and it was shortly after, and when Tiy was but ten days gone, that Alcibiades got into mischief—a piece of folly whose consequences were unending.

The palace of Agis, such as it was, lay beyond the town on the bank of the Eurotas, surrounded by a pleasant garden; the Spartans, oddly enough, were fond of flowers. He was strolling along the river bank in the late afternoon, very bored, when he came to the wall and saw a young woman sitting in the garden alone. He knew at once that she must be Temea, the wife of Agis, although he had never seen her; she apparently avoided the town. He had heard she was a pretty woman, but had found it impossible to associate that adjective with a Spartan female and never given her a thought.

This woman as she sat under the drooping branches of a tree with her profile turned to him was undeniably pretty, with her small, regular features, and she was the only decently built woman he had seen in Sparta. She was of medium height and slender, and her figure had a drooping grace. Even her hair was brown, not everlasting tow or yellow; it was braided and pinned about her head with little amber combs. Her long white garment was confined on either shoulder with gold clasps, and a broad, jewelled ornament held the girdle in place.

Where under the heavens of Lacedæmonia had Agis found her? There were no other kingdoms of Hellas from which a king might seek a wife; she must be a member of one of the prolific royal families of her own state.

Alcibiades had seen many of these women, and found them no more feminine nor attractive than the common run of those Amazons. But inconsistencies could happen even in Sparta, and here was a lily among overgrown roses—or cabbages.

He leaned his arms on the wall and regarded her with pleasure, for surely that was his right. He was conscious of no predatory impulse. Beauty in any form, even in a child playing in the dirt by the wayside, always arrested him.

She turned suddenly and looked at him, and he saw that although pretty her face lacked distinction and character. But even so she was a lily among cabbages.

She rose and came forward, her eyes languishing.

"It is Alcibiades, is it not?" And her voice and the broad Dorian speech were a shock coming from that little mouth with its short silly upper lip.

"It is, O Queen, and I am deeply flattered that you know me."

"I have seen you often," she said archly. "From the doorway of the house of a friend where I stood hidden as you passed. You have passed here often enough, but you never looked over the wall before. Will you not come in and sit with me in the garden, Alcibiades?"

"But your women—hand-maidens—queens are not allowed the liberty of ordinary women, even in Sparta."

She pouted and tossed her head. "I do as I please, for I am Temea, and my women are faithful. And I am very lonesome."

Alcibiades shrugged and opened a postern gate. They sat under the tree, and she babbled on like the river below the willows at the foot of the garden. She told him all the details of her daily life, of her loneliness, her longing for amusement, and gossiped of her friends, husband, and children. But although it seemed to him that she turned herself inside out, there was one thing she omitted to mention: Agis, terrified by an

earthquake that had shaken Sparta at night some months before, had accepted it as an omen that he was to forgo the society of his wife for a year. Whether she was too silly or too infatuated to confide this domestic secret Alcibiades never knew, but if she had babbled it out with the rest he would have fled that fatal garden forthwith.

She did not attract him particularly, for she made a poor showing when he recalled the brilliant hetæræ of Athens; if he cared little for their conversation, at least they were educated and could always be relied upon to be lively and amusing at the banquet.

But Temea had the charm of youth and beauty and she was throwing herself into his arms. And she was a dazzling contrast to those exuberant creatures he hated the sight of. He felt no compunction on behalf of Agis, who was the one man in Sparta he thoroughly disliked. As haughty and intolerant as himself, their wills had locked many times, and they had insulted each other freely. A mass of idiotic superstition with a perfect military brain on top, nothing more.

He was debating whether the risk would be worth while, when the imp that had lain dormant in his brain for two years suddenly awoke and began to dance. How amusing to have his race rule in Lacedæmonia! To found a dynasty, which he could not acknowledge, to be sure, would give him an ironic satisfaction. This woman had told him that her two children were girls, and it was quite evident she would welcome a son, who need not necessarily be of royal lineage on both sides.

Perhaps he also felt he would be taking a subtle revenge on Tiy.

So, as the house had no windows facing the garden, and the shadows were lengthening, and the river road deserted, he obligingly kissed her.

XI

THE allies and subject states of Athens had no intention of paying the increase of tribute, nor any, could they avoid it. Now, when her ships for the most part lay rotting in Syracuse harbour, and Lacedæmonia was at her gates again, was their time to throw off the yoke. Envoys went from Eubœa and Lesbos to King Agis at Decelea and declared their intention to revolt were they supported by a Peloponnesian fleet against the general population, who might not favour the designs of an oligarchical government. He gave them enthusiastic promises of assistance, but soon after found his hands tied by the ephors in Sparta, where envoys from Chios, that large, fertile, well-governed island, and the most powerful and valuable of the Athenian allies, were pressing their claims, supported by Alcibiades.

And not only by the Athenian favourite. Persia was ready to act at last. Not on the mainland, for the time was still distant for that bold stroke, but for her lost cities in Asia Minor.

The vast kingdom of Persia, covering two million square miles, extending from the shores of the Euxine Sea in the north to the Arabian Sea in the south, and throwing out large curves east and west, was divided into provinces, each ruled by a Satrap or viceroy who was responsible to no one but the Great King in Susa. Tissaphernes, the Satrap of the region whose capital was Sardis, and Pharnabazus, who governed the Hellespontine Phrygia, were directed by the Great King, Darius II, to claim the tribute due from the Asiatic Greek cities; never paid since the Delian League had protected them from their former oppressors. Tissaphernes was directed to send envoys to Sparta with those from Chios and her sister state, Erythræ, and propose to that kingdom an alliance with Persia for joint operations against the Athenian Empire in Asia.

It would be an alliance of mutual benefit, for Persia would regain her lost dominions, and Sparta the friendship of powerful states who would lend the aid of their navies in the final conquest of Athens. The king pledged himself to pay the daily expenses of the fleet.

At the same time Pharnabazus, acting on his own initiative, sent envoys to Sparta asking for a fleet to assist in reconquering the lost territory on the Propontis and in Thrace. The two Satraps were rivals and each wished the credit of the Spartan alliance and of taking the first step in breaking up the Athenian Empire.

Alcibiades, who had received a recent letter from Tiy, and who was himself convinced that the first attack should be upon the most vulnerable point of the tottering empire, threw the weight of his influence to Chios and Tissaphernes, and carried the day. The government of Chios was oligarchical and would lend itself and its navy to the Persian scheme of conquering the mainland. Heavily reinforced by the navies of these conquered cities, Sparta and her allies would then proceed to the north and overwhelm the territory looked upon with a jealous eye by Pharnabazus.

After many delays, caused by earthquakes, inopportune seasons of festival, parleys with Corinth and King Agis, a fleet of ships was dragged overland from the Corinthian to the Saronic Gulf, and a squadron under the General Chalkideus and accompanied by Alcibiades was to start from Laconia simultaneously. But the messenger who was to have brought the date for the sailing of the expedition had very different news to report. The fleet had been attacked by the Athenians, the General killed, and the ships run ashore.

The ephors at first refused to hear of sending out a small squadron of five triremes ; they must wait until the allies prepared another fleet. But Alcibiades was determined to leave Sparta and leave it at once. One of the ephors elected that year was Endius, the man whom he had tricked and humiliated in Athens, but

whom he had deliberately courted until he had won him over to forget the past, believe in, and love him. He played on his ambition. Let his be the part to liberate Ionia and make the first move in the game with Persia, instead of permitting Agis to win all the honours. To the other ephors and to the Ecclesia he asserted convincingly that the squadron would reach Chios before the defeat in the Saronic Gulf became public and could be passed off as the precursor of the main fleet. He also pledged himself to procure the revolt of Chios and other islands, for he had relatives and friends in all of them and knew their temper.

The Spartans recalled that he had made no mistakes in the past, that he had given them one great victory, that his advice had invariably been sound and wise. And his energy as ever was too much for them. They gave their consent. The squadron sailed and Alcibiades with it, but not before he had dispatched a letter to Tiy, asking her to go at once to Miletus, which city he intended to subdue as soon as he had finished his work in Chios and Erythræ.

BOOK V

BOOK V

I

THE little squadron sped swiftly through the blue Ægean Sea, a sky of unflecked blue above. The green islands were gay with the colours of spring. The singing of birds could be heard over the water, and the smoke of sacrifice rose from a hundred white temples. A steady breeze filled the sails and the deep voices of the rowers chanted a grave Dorian hymn of praise.

Spring entered into Alcibiades once more. He had seen the last of Sparta and a life of action was before him. He wore his old uniform and helmet and felt they symbolized the death of mere existence and re-birth of life. The world was his to conquer and his opportunities had never been greater.

Although he had always been the healthiest of men with a constitution no excesses could stagger, he felt even healthier and stronger after the hard discipline and enforced respectability of those thirty months in Sparta. The red blood sang in his veins.

Chalkideus was his tool and did as he was told. The few boats and vessels they encountered on those quiet smiling waters were driven before them until they reached the shores of Asia Minor.

The large island of Chios lay half-way up the coast and almost touching Erythræ, an abrupt and spreading projection from the mainland. A superb coast, that of Asia Minor, with its wild irregularities looking out upon a blue sea with wooded, soaring islands, its beetling mountain ranges and deep river valleys; beautiful columned cities everywhere.

The fairest islands in the world, thought Alcibiades,

long shut between frowning mountains; and each supporting a contented population and ambitious discontented Oligarchs!

He reached the city of Chios on the eastern coast of its island in the early morning, his warlike squadron, shields and spears of hoplites glittering in the rising sun, creating a tremendous excitement in the breasts of the inhabitants; the greater number of whom had received not a hint of the designs of the Oligarchs. Alcibiades was taken immediately before the Council, and then before the hastily convened Ecclesia. He let loose all his fiery eloquence and told them his squadron was but the herald of a great fleet that would make them independent of a helpless decaying Athens. The oligarchical Council, pretending to be as surprised and excited as the populace, took an immediate decision to revolt, and the dismayed Demos—that had never felt the yoke of Athens but had the usual Greek love of autonomy—was rushed to an approving vote.

The scene was repeated at Erythræ and its neighbour, Clazomenæ, and with similar results. A fleet of eight triremes dispatched in haste from Athens was chased to Samos by the Chian fleet and took refuge in its harbour.

Alcibiades was now at liberty to turn his attention to Miletus. He had his own reasons for wishing to claim and enter that city as soon as possible, and he also wanted to present another victory to Endius while there was still time, for Agis was at Corinth assembling a fresh allied fleet. Not only did he appreciate the powerful support Endius had given him, but Agis was now the bitterest enemy he had ever made. Aside from his kingly resentment at the ascendancy of an Athenian exile in the councils of his state, he was quite capable, slow as his Spartan mind might be, of doing a neat sum in arithmetic. He knew that the son Temea had presented to his household was none of his, and every messenger to Decelea had brought

him a fine dish of gossip; even the almost incredible whisper that although the brat had been named Leotychides his mother made no scruple of calling him Alcibiades to her women. Agis made two vows, vows that reverberated from Corinth to Chios: that boy should never succeed to the throne, and he would have vengeance on Alcibiades did it take him a lifetime to accomplish it.

Alcibiades set out with twenty Chian triremes and his own five, passed Samos unperceived for the moment, and appeared before Miletus demanding the surrender of the city. The train was already laid and he was admitted to the largest of the three harbours immediately. When the Athenian fleet—now augmented by twelve additional triremes—came up they found the port closed against them, and retired.

II

ALCIBIADES had visited Miletus several times and always as the guest of one of Aspasia's many relatives, but he had no intention of seeking any of them now. (He knew he must have incurred that august lady's deepest displeasure.) With his usual foresight he had taken care to make friends among the influential men of the city, and had corresponded with a number of them. This correspondence had been more active of late, and the most prominent Oligarchs of that proud city, older far than the Athens to which it had been forced to pay tribute would it save itself from the Persian yoke, met him at the gate of the outer wall.

A horse splendidly caparisoned awaited him, and he entered the city in triumph, greeted by a cheering multitude gathered in the wide streets and Agora, for there was no questioning Demos here. All had resented being forced to bow to the will of distant Athens, and had overwhelmed and imprisoned her garrison as the fleet entered the harbour.

Alcibiades wore his shabby old uniform and battered helmet (neither of which could be replaced in Sparta), but sat his horse as proudly as had he been a king in robes of state. He was now thirty-eight, but years, dissipations, dark and brooding passions, left no impress on the noble regularity of his features and healthy skin, nor on his graceful upright figure. So would he be until he died, said even his enemies, for however he might incur the jealousy of the gods they never could bring themselves to destroy the beauty they had compounded of their own essence.

The women pelted him with flowers from the house-tops, uttering cries of admiration, and the children sang his praises.

He appeared before the Council, made an eloquent speech to a rapt assembly that saw autonomy in those kind and friendly eyes, and then went to the house of his friend Nicander: a superb stately dwelling, richly furnished, like all houses of the wealthy in that beautiful Ionic city. They lunched alone on the shady side of the aula and he related the winning of the three cities to an eager listener.

Secretly he despised the Ionians, regarding them as an effete race enervated by Asiatic luxury, and Nicander was no exception. Although the Milesians in their turn despised the Ephesians, they imitated their dress. Nicander wore a long violet robe called calasiris, embroidered with round figures in gold, and a yellow cape. On his well-oiled and scented head was a cap worked with figures of dogs and lions. His seal ring was a splendid emerald, and another jewel depended from a heavy gold chain about his neck. He spoke with a soft drawl, but his mind was alert enough, and when called upon for information gave it promptly.

"Tissaphernes is here," he said, "and will give you audience this afternoon; you and your General."

"I wish an audience alone first. The terms must

be settled between us before that blundering Spartan has a chance to antagonize him. When the treaty is drawn up and I tell him to sign it he will make no trouble. What news have you from Athens ? ”

“ They are bestirring themselves ! I will admit they are a brave and energetic people and full of resource, as ever. You remember those thousand talents Pericles put away some twenty years ago, never to be used save in direst emergency ? Every citizen in Athens, apparently, agreed the time was come. They are using it to equip what triremes they have left and building new ones. They may send in due course quite a fleet against you.”

“ The Lacedæmonians and their allies will send many more, and they have Generals of experience. Athens has none—although native ability must be reckoned with. What sort of man is this Tissaphernes ? ”

Nicander shrugged. “ You know the Asiatics. Or do not, for even we, who have lived on this coast for two thousand years, find it impossible to follow the windings and involutions of their minds. With Tissaphernes we have friendly relations ; he visits us often, as he enjoys our wonderful city, its society and its theatre, and we are welcome at his court. He has a fine appearance and manners, and no doubt you will find him an agreeable companion. Keep awake, though, and have everything put down in black and white. Are the Lacedæmonians to be trusted ? They secretly promise us autonomy while pretending to agree to the terms of the Great King.”

“ The Lacedæmonians wish to rule all Hellas, and will make any terms to accomplish that object. But you know the history of the Peloponnesian Confederacy, of which Sparta has been the head from the first. Every state is autonomous and pays no tribute, although men and treasure may be requisitioned in time of war. Her navy will be too strong

for Persia when this war is over. All states, on both islands and coast, will be granted autonomy."

"So we have understood, but if Tissaphernes has any suspicion of it, prove your diplomacy. Take a nap now and we will visit him an hour hence."

But Alcibiades was in no mood for sleep. After Nicander had gone to his room he sat looking into the aula, cool and refreshing with its heavy palms and splashing fountain; a larger and more abundant fountain than any in Athens. He thought not so much of his coming interview with the man upon whom his future perhaps depended, or even of the schemes which ranged far beyond the immediate interests of Lacedæmonia and her Ægean ambitions, as of Tiy. Was she in Miletus? It was three months since he had heard from her; in her last letter, written ambiguously, lest it fall into the wrong hands, she had given him to understand that their deep-laid plots were working satisfactorily. Both the Satrap in Egypt and Tissaphernes believed he was the tool of Tiy and working unwittingly for the exhaustion of all Hellas. They were exultant—and so was he.

He had hesitated to ask Nicander for possible news of her, but as he had written her his address in Miletus surely if she were in the city she would have communicated with him. If she had delayed her departure from Egypt too long he feared the capture of her galley, or whatever vessel she may have taken, by some prowling trireme of either side.

As he and his friend were walking up the street to the house where the Satrap was lodged he asked him casually if there were any strangers in the city.

"There are always visitors to our beautiful city," said Nicander proudly. "Several arrived from Crete not long since."

Alcibiades felt a stirring at the roots of his hair, but was reassured by the reply to his abrupt demand for further information. "No one I know then!

And no others? I have seen nothing but Spartan faces for so long I would welcome as many foreign ones as possible."

"All our hetæræ are Ionians," said Nicander jestingly. "We do not need to send to Corinth, nor elsewhere. They are as beautiful as ever, and no doubt scenting their hair and anointing themselves at the moment in anticipation of a visit from Alcibiades."

"I must make myself presentable first." He was agreeably diverted. "I have nothing but what I stand up in. You must put me in the way of a new uniform, and some decent garments for the banquet. And before the sun rises again over that great mountain yonder."

"My own wardrobe is at your disposal, and we are about the same height. Your uniform can be copied in a day."

Alcibiades repressed a shudder. "My tastes are those of a simple soldier," he said apologetically. "One or two plain coloured chitons and himatia, and one white will be enough. Zeus, it will be pleasant to get into them! I wore that hideous grey Spartan cloak for two and a half years."

Tissaphernes was lodged with one of the Council, but he received Alcibiades sitting on a pile of gorgeous cushions that ill accorded with the marble benches and chairs of the aula. As Nicander had said, he was a handsome man, the colour of light bronze, with curly black beard and hair. His eyes were sleepy and his red mouth heavy, but Alcibiades was not slow to guess that no mind had ever been more wide awake and keen.

He made a slight obeisance before the great man, who assumed all the state and privileges of Darius himself in Susa, and the two eyed each other in silence after the amenities were over and Nicander had retired.

"Sit beside me, Alcibiades son of Cleinias and most

illustrious of Athenians," said the Satrap in his soft silken voice. "You are as beautiful as the sun god, but I know well that your beauty, renowned even to the court of the Great King, has not made you effeminate like these Ionians, and you are the greatest soldier of your day. But while it gives me pleasure to look at you, I would strike fire from your mind, of which I have heard as much as of your beauty and military genius."

Alcibiades had been accustomed all his life to the compliments of men as of women, and he did not blush as the Persian may have expected. He made as flowery a reply as he could think of at a moment's notice, and seated himself on the cushions; at some distance from that purple robe lest he shed dust from his uniform. He had removed his helmet, and turned it upside down as a convenient place to look into when those heavy eyes sought his own too searchingly. He knew that he had met his match in diplomacy but was in nowise disheartened.

His eyes met the great man's frankly. "And are you prepared to enter into a formal treaty with the Lacedæmonians, O Satrap?" he asked.

"It is of that I wish to talk with you," said the Persian suavely. "To you I owe the promise of a great fleet to assist me in recovering our lost dominions, and to you shall I give my full confidence."

I wonder! thought his guest, but he replied with the smile he well knew made him irresistible, "Your confidence is deserved, O Satrap, for it was indeed I who won the ephors to your cause when the envoys from Pharnabazus were tempting them with a gift of twenty-five talents. But I shall be quite frank and say that I upheld your envoys because I believed the first blow at Athens should not be directed from the Hellespont. I would not risk a defeat, for its Greek cities are faithful and strongly fortified, and the Athenians will make war with the vigour of

despair ; demagogues and calamity have not destroyed their energies. We have no mean foe to contend with, O illustrious right hand of the Great King."

"True. True," said the Satrap meditatively. "But Athens has treated you harshly, and you are very generous to give her such meed of praise."

"I am an Athenian born and as such know the virtues as well as the weaknesses of my countrymen. I should be a fool if I tried to deceive myself."

"And perhaps you will tell me your ultimate designs," said the Satrap insinuatingly. "We must have no secrets from each other if we are to work together for mutual benefit. Surely you have no love for the Lacedæmonians ?"

Alcibiades, that blunt soldier, replied vehemently, "I hate the very sight of them, but as they used me so I use them. They shall help me to gain Athens for myself. Let us come to an understanding, O Satrap, for the dealings of your envoys in Sparta were with me, not with the ephors, whatever they may have thought. I know that you want nothing but this lost coast with its rich valleys and fields and rivers. It was the outpost of your great empire and belongs to you by divine right. Help me to turn on the Lacedæmonians when they have served their purpose, and make me powerful in my own country. I for my part will see that these cities never rebel again."

"Yes, that is a fine bargain!" The Persian looked into those candid eyes and his heavy lips parted in a smile. He knew from Tiy that this young Athenian was consumed with ambition and would stop at nothing to achieve his ends, but that his mind, although brilliant, resourceful, and vigorous, was too direct for intrigue, and his conduct in Sparta had been subtly directed by herself. Easy prey ; the more so as he thought himself very clever because he had managed those ephors by himself, whereas the envoys, as subtle as Tiy, had no doubt suggested every move.

"Persia will help Alcibiades to achieve his just ambitions," he said warmly. "We have no designs on the original Hellas. When you are established in Athens, the Lacedæmonians will be sent home to their mountain fastness and told to stay there on pain of extinction by Persia. They will be made to know once for all that we are your firm ally and can always be relied upon."

"There will never have been firmer friends in all history," cried Alcibiades enthusiastically. "And our ambitions will never clash."

"Never!" The Persian spoke with equal enthusiasm and equal truth. "And now I will read you the treaty my secretary has drawn up for your approval."

He lifted a roll of parchment from a low table and read its brief contents aloud, glancing occasionally at his fellow diplomatist, whose face expressed only interest and approval.

"'The Lacedæmonians and their allies make an alliance with the Great King and Tissaphernes on the following terms: (I) All the territory and all the cities which are in the possession of the King, or were the possession of his forefathers, shall be the King's, and whatever revenue or other advantages the Athenians derived from these cities the King and the Lacedæmonians and their allies shall combine to prevent them from receiving such revenue or advantage. (II) The King and the Lacedæmonians and their allies shall carry on the war with the Athenians in common, and they shall not make peace with the Athenians unless both parties agree. (III) Whosoever revolts from the King shall be the enemy of the Lacedæmonians and their allies, and whosoever revolts from the Lacedæmonians and their allies shall be the enemy of the King in like manner.'"

"Of course you understand," said Tissaphernes confidingly, "that the last line is abrogated by the

understanding between ourselves. But it is necessary to round off the agreement."

"I understand perfectly," said Alcibiades; who did indeed, but duly affected noncognition of that significant clause that would give Persia dominion over all the states of Hellas once subdued and briefly held by Xerxes. But this was a treaty he would have no scruple in consigning to the flames as soon as his purpose was accomplished. With the Athenian navy restored to its full strength, and then greatly augmented, he would make short work of Persia.

"If you will send a messenger to Chalkideus, who is at the house of one of my friends," he said, "he will come at once. The treaty should be signed without delay."

Tissaphernes clapped his hands, and dispatched a message by a resplendent officer in a cloak of crimson cloth, who, summoned by a slave, entered and salaamed.

"And now," he said, when the man had bowed himself out backward, "as I alone can enable the Lacedæmonians to hold Miletus against the Athenians, for some of the cities down the coast may prove faithful and furnish them support, I must establish a force in the city and have concluded to build a citadel. The time may come when Miletus will suspect our intentions, although at present convinced I am here to protect them from the Athenians. To allay suspicion at present I shall build it between the outer and inner walls and close to the southern gate."

"A magnificent idea. I will help disseminate that belief." Alcibiades, who had every idea of restoring Miletus to her former condition in the Athenian Empire, smiled encouragingly. "The Milesians are too convinced of the power of Lacedæmonia to fear Persia. The contents of this treaty they will never know."

"Until it is too late," said Tissaphernes, smacking his lips. "Until it is too late."

Chalkideus had been told to be guided by Alcibiades

in all things, and he signed the treaty without hesitation and no deciphering of its sinister meaning. His mind travelled as far as Asia Minor and no farther.

III

Two days passed but still Alcibiades heard nothing of Tiy. Nevertheless he had amused himself well, for on the first night Tissaphernes had given him a banquet at which the loveliest of the hetæræ were present (he learned incidentally that Nemea had gone to Susa), and on the second there had been an even gayer one at the house of his host.

He was walking, clad in his new uniform and helmet, up one of the broad streets of the city after a visit to the harbour, when he saw Tissaphernes issue from the portals of a house not far from Nicander's. He was about to quicken his steps and overtake him when he caught sight of a familiar face in the doorway.

"Saon!" he exclaimed, but there was more anger than welcome in his voice. "What—what——"

"Oh, Master!" The man, his face irradiated with joy, ran forward and would have kissed his hand, but Alcibiades waved him off.

"I am not an Egyptian woman, nor yet a Persian," he said cuttingly. "It is high time you returned to civilization. Why have I not seen you before this? How long have you been here? No lies!"

"We arrived yesterday before dawn, O Master, but I did not know you were in Miletus, or no one could have kept me from you. The Lady Tiy cannot know either——"

"Is she within? No need to announce me."

He strode down the passage and saw Tiy standing beside the fountain in the aula, magnificent in a robe of gold cloth, a diadem sparkling on her hair, massed out like wings on either side. Her scarlet flexible mouth was smiling ironically.

"I heard your voice," she began, but Alcibiades interrupted her roughly.

"What do you mean by receiving that Persian swine before you even let me know you were in Miletus?" he cried, beside himself. "Twenty-four hours and more you have been here, and sent me no message. What is that man to you?"

His face was flushed, his eyes blazing, his brow black as thunder. The red spot appeared on Tiy's high cheek bones, but she replied quietly:

"Why do you take that tone with me, Alcibiades? I am neither your wife nor your hetæra——"

"You are more than either. You belong to me. If you have preferred another man I'll kill him and you, too. I've missed you every minute, and you come here in Miletus and see another man before me and send me no word. Are you playing a double game? If you are——"

"Oh, Alcibiades, calm yourself!" The colour had faded and she sat down abruptly. "If you will listen I will explain——"

"You have been here since dawn yesterday!" He still glared at her, but was insensibly affected by her repose, which his tirade had failed to shake. "Well —I am listening."

"It is true I arrived yesterday morning. But the sea makes me ill and I thought only of rest—nor did I wish to see you while looking my worst. This morning I was about to send for you when I received a message from Tissaphernes demanding an interview. I had hoped to conceal my presence from him until I had talked with you, but forgot the Satrap in Egypt would be sure to send him a letter by the same vessel. That is all."

Alcibiades removed his helmet and threw himself into a chair. "I behaved like a brute," he said humbly. "But if I was enraged you will admit it looked as if I had just cause. And I was growing more impatient

hour by hour—how wonderful you look—how different in that gorgeous robe and in this beautiful house—your uniform on a horse! You are even more resplendent than in Athens. And more beautiful than ever! But—but—somehow—more remote. What has happened?" And he frowned once more but looked at her anxiously.

She smiled slightly. "It is nearly a year since we parted. An interrupted intimacy cannot be resumed in a day, and much has happened to both of us."

"What has happened to you?" His eyes were blue lightning again. "Are you married? Are you going to marry this infernal Persian?"

"I am not married and I have no intention of entering a harem. But I have been plunged deep in intrigue, and have told so many lies I hardly know them from truth. And it may all be thrown away—you have made a deathless enemy in Agis!" she burst out uncontrollably, her own eyes flashing. "He may ruin all your hopes, the splendid results of all this plotting, by refusing to have anything to do with this war unless you are dismissed from the fleet."

Alcibiades had the grace to blush. "It was the stupidest thing I ever did in my life," he said, looking at her contritely. "The more so as I was not even fascinated by the woman. I merely thought it would be amusing to found a new line in Lacedæmonia."

"An unworthy idea—any way you look at it." She spoke severely, but a gleam of amusement had routed the anger in her eyes.

"And if you had not left me, Tiy, I never should have seen the woman, for I never would have taken long walks by myself—hours that I should have spent with you."

"I know your talent for putting the blame for your acts on some one else," she said dryly, "but I do not recall that I kept you out of mischief in Athens."

"But much as I cared for you then, I had learned to care far more in Sparta. I never knew it was in me to miss any one as I have missed you."

"I infer you are still finding reasons for being in love with me! And have no doubt resisted the charms of these Milesian sirens."

He did not blush again. He met her satiric gaze defiantly. "And if I have not, what have you to say? You cannot expect me to be faithful to a woman who holds herself aloof. You are too much of a man to be illogical."

"I am not a man—but that is neither here nor there. What of Agis?"

"He can do me less harm than you think. The ephors are convinced they cannot win this war without me, and he has far less influence with them than I. If I am no longer there to exercise my personal ascendancy, neither is he. His hands are full between Attica and Corinth. But of course I have considered that danger. We will discuss it later. Your time has not been wasted, dear Tiy, and this Persian is completely fooled. He thinks me an able soldier and possibly statesman, but without guile and no match for him."

"So I gathered from his complacency this morning. And he is fascinated by you as a companion. You have evidently put forth all your arts!"

"Be sure of that. Fortunately I rather like him. Zeus knows he shines like the sun and the starry heavens after the dun night of those Spartans. I enjoy matching my wits with his, and I enjoy his society, for he is a cultivated man and has read our poets and philosophers. We shall be boon-brothers before a month is out."

"Well, remember he is an Asiatic, and never be sure of him. What are your immediate plans?"

"I must be guided by events. There will be much fighting at sea—the Athenians have resources. I must go to Lesbos and other islands and see how the revolt

is progressing—or instigate it—for this I promised the Spartans. But I shall always return to Miletus, and you must stay here. Was this house prepared for you ? ”

“ As soon as I received your letter I told the Satrap in Egypt to communicate with some one here and find me a house that I might continue to direct your unsubtle mind, so lacking in talent for intrigue ! I have brought slaves with me, for I wish those in Athens to remain there until my return. Would that all this lying and plotting were over and we were there now ! ”

Alcibiades sighed. “ A wish I heartily echo. Zeus knows I have been homesick more than once. I used to believe that the melancholy that lies at the foundation of the Greek character had passed me by, but as I grow older I become more aware of it. There are moments when life seems futile. A few years hence I shall be as dead as Agamemnon. And my ambitions ashes in an urn. I sometimes wish I were a philosopher or a tragic poet, for then I might leave something behind me besides the wild and reckless name of a man who would conquer the world—and if he did would be too tired and too sated to take pleasure in power.”

“ This is not like you, Alcibiades,” she said gently. “ But—I have sometimes thought you were greater than you knew.”

“ Ah ! ” he cried, his eyes sparkling again. “ If Athens would but have helped me to be great ! If she had but borne with me and believed in me, I could have proved myself a great man before this. I gave her my best and I asked nothing better than to continue to give it, but she asked for the worst and she got it—— Oh, yes, I admit it was my conduct that alarmed her, that I could have controlled my passions and evil ways, and modelled myself on Pericles, ignoring the fires of youth and the impulses of a nature so different from his. But a mother should understand

her child, understand and forgive, and Athens never had a child so like herself. Into me she crowded her essence and her genius, and in me lay her hope. If I go down to final disaster she will go with me, or linger on the brink a forlorn and wraithlike thing, turning this way and that, fumbling, tripping, feebly hoping, but with never an Alcibiades to put life into her again——"

He sprang to his feet. "I must go now, for I have a meeting with the Council. It is my part to assure them of the good intentions of Tissaphernes in building his citadel. I too hardly know lying from truth. So help me Zeus, when I am lord of Athens I'll make a daily rite of shouting bald truth from the housetops. I dine with you to-night."

Before she could guess his intention he swooped down and kissed her warmly on the mouth. As he went hastily through the entrance he waved his helmet gaily. But she was looking at him with sombre reproach.

IV

STILL the Peloponnesians did not come, and meanwhile the Athenians were having their triumphs in the Ægean, although the squadron guarding the captured fleet in the Saronic Gulf was surprised and defeated with the loss of four triremes, and the allies were rapidly refitting for service in Ionia. But the fleet in the Ægean, reinforced more than once, defeated the Chians at Lesbos and took a part of the island.

They next inflicted a bloody defeat upon the Chian forces near their own island and drove them within the fortifications; to witness the ravaging of the country-side even as the Athenians on their walls were looking down upon the devastations of Agis the Spartan.

The Lacedæmonian Admiral, Astyochus, had arrived with ten triremes, but he was no match for the

Athenians, who must have their way until the main fleet arrived from Corinth. "And when that will be Zeus knows," said Alcibiades to Tiy, as they stood on the outer wall of Miletus, scanning the horizon. "More earthquakes, no doubt, more holy festivals, unfavourable signs in the entrails of some cursed goat——"

"Look!" Tiy pointed her parasol at the western horizon. "Do you see those dots? Surely there is movement—they cannot be islands——"

Alcibiades bent his hand above his eyes, for the western sky was a blaze of gold, and gazed at those moving dots. "Yes," he said grimly, "it is a fleet but it comes from the wrong direction. No Peloponnesian fleet would take that route; it would go as far south perhaps as Crete and then sail up the coast. That is another fleet from Athens. Zeus! Zeus! Zeus!"

"But when your fleet comes it will far outnumber the Athenian," said Tiy, who had done little else these last months but pour oil on the seething waters of his impatience. "It was to be expected the Athenians would win the first victories, and they were ever quicker of thought and action than any other Greeks. But the Peloponnesians cannot be far behind them now."

"Unless they are rowing among themselves. Pericles always said that one strong state was worth a dozen allies, who are of as many different opinions, and jealous of precedence. Oh, they'll come! But when? When? Look at those ships! How many can you count?"

"They are too far away yet—but what a picture!"

The fleet, still distant, skimming the sea before a strong breeze, looked like birds of bright plumage about to take wing. A green streak had appeared in the sunset and shed its light over the water: a scene so calm and beautiful it was impossible to believe those gaily dancing ships were harbingers of death, that calm expanse, swimming in the pale green light, would ever resound with the clash of shields and the groans of

dying men. Twinkling lights appeared on the islands, some high on the mountains where shepherds lit their fires. The furnaces of the charcoal-burners glowed redly, and as the glory in the west faded the sky burst forth into stars.

"Forty-eight!" exclaimed Alcibiades. "And we have fifteen, and the Chians not to be counted on!"

Almost opposite Miletus was a group of twenty islands, some too small for habitation, little more than satellites to Patmos. North-west of the city was Samos with a constellation of isles and islets dropping from her south-western peninsula. Between these two groups was a channel, and through it sailed the Athenian fleet in quiet triumph; a splendid sight with the square coloured sails holding the wind, rows of hoplites with spears upright standing on the decks. A pæan of praise came sweetly over the waters.

Alcibiades had given way to a moment of pride, but it fled and he turned angrily to Tiy. "The best piece of luck that has befallen the Athenians," he said harshly, "was the quick successful revolt of the Samian Demos. If the Oligarchs had been strong enough Samos would be ours to-day and the Athenians have no harbour in the Ægean. No wonder they are encouraged—believe, no doubt, that Athenè has relented and will protect them as she protected the Greeks before Troy. Well—the next step will be an attempt on Miletus, unless the Lacedæmonians arrive in time. Let us go down. There must be a conference at once."

V

TISSAPHERNES had brought a small body of troops with him (his main force was at Sardis), mercenary foot-soldiers and cavalry; the Milesians had eight hundred hoplites. This insignificant force, together with the hoplites of the five Lacedæmonian triremes,

was called upon the next day to engage in battle with one thousand Athenian and fifteen hundred Argive troops, who had effected a landing in the night.

It was the right of Chalkideus to command the troops on his side, but there was no jealousy in the breast of Alcibiades, who never aspired to lead a hopeless cause. He fought with the Persian cavalry.

But in spite of the unequal numbers, the Athenians did not gain an easy victory. Thoroughly despising the Ionians, they took no pains to preserve rank and order and lost three hundred men in the earlier part of the day. But they were successful in the end, Chalkideus was slain, Alcibiades assumed command and marshalled his troops safely through the gates and behind the walls of the city. He was galloping through the streets to the Council Chamber when he saw a messenger running from the direction of the southern gate. They met a moment later and he said peremptorily :

" I am in command. Give me your message. Have the Lacedæmonians been sighted "

The man recovered his breath and answered rapidly : " There are fifty-two triremes, of which twenty-two are Sicilian, under the Lacedæmonian Strategos Theramenes, O Alcibiades. He has heard of the battle and thinks it best to remain in the Gulf of Iasus until he hears from Astyochus."

Alcibiades waited to hear no more. The battle had lasted all day and he had eaten nothing since morning, but he obtained a fresh horse and rode it hard out of the city and down the coast until he saw the camp-fires. The ships had been beached for the night and tents erected. A sentry, hearing those galloping hoofs, ran out and challenged in his gruff Dorian voice, but he was a Spartan and, recognizing the Athenian who was so high in the confidence of the Lacedæmonians, lowered his spear.

" Take me to Theramenes at once," commanded

Alcibiades. "If he is asleep, awaken him. I must speak with him immediately."

But Theramenes was not asleep. He sat alone in his tent, eating his Spartan supper. He rose in surprise but with a welcoming smile as a dishevelled figure burst into his presence.

"Greetings, Alcibiades. I am glad to see you are alive. Tell me of the battle——"

"Give me something to eat first!" And conscious for the first time of hunger he sat down unceremoniously and devoured the General's supper. For four months he had lived on the delicacies of Ionia, but never had he eaten with greater relish. When he had disposed of the last bit of dry bread and the last drop of black broth, leaving the General to forage for himself later, he took a deep draught of wine and then turned to his host, who was sitting back in his camp chair regarding him with quiet amusement. He had been hungry himself at the end of a hard day of battle.

Alcibiades began abruptly. "I learned from a prisoner that the Athenians intend to build a wall of blockade across the isthmus that connects Miletus with the mainland. You know how quickly those walls are built. You must come to our aid by dawn to-morrow and engage the Athenians. If Miletus is captured all our hopes in Ionia are extinguished."

"Where is Astyochus?" asked Theramenes. "My mission is to deliver the fleet to him, and then return to Sparta."

"He is at Chios, but is sure to sail to the south as soon as he hears of to-day's battle. He has only ten ships, but these Athenians intend to fight their battles on land unless caught off guard. You can meet Astyochus at Miletus."

"I shall have to consult the Sicilian General, Hermokrates," said Theramenes, rising; "but he is impatient for action. I can promise you we will start

with the sunrise. And now you had better get some sleep.''

He left the tent, and not three minutes later Alcibiades had forgotten past and future on the hard mattress of the Spartan General.

When the fleet sailed toward Miletus in the morning not an Athenian ship was to be seen. Those Generals too had heard of the approach of the Lacedæmonian fleet, but not of its proportions, and fearing to be outnumbered, retired to the harbour of Samos.

Theramenes and the Syracusan General, after recovering the ships the Athenians had captured the day before and held near the island of Lâde, agreed to help Tissaphernes in an assault on Iasus, a recalcitrant Persian city, to be rewarded by much booty in the sure case of success. Iasus capitulated after a short resistance, the usurper was sent to Susa to have his head taken off, and a large part of the booty was divided among the troops.

VI

It was a month after the battle of Miletus that Alcibiades, who was deep in discussion with Tiy, was summoned to the door by Astyochus. The two men had little liking for each other, for Alcibiades urged an immediate advance to the relief of Chios, and Astyochus, who had quarrelled with the Lacedæmonian Governor of the island, refused to consider it. Alcibiades, wondering on what matter the man could wish to consult him, went without ; and saw instantly that he had ill news to impart.

" Take me to your lodgings where we can speak in private,'' said the Spartan curtly ; and Alcibiades led him to the house of Nicander and his own room.

" Now what is it ? '' he demanded. " We shall not be overheard here.''

"It is this. I have received orders to put you to death. King Agis has convinced the Spartans that you are a traitor. They believe him because the revolt of all the Asiatic cities and the islands has not been accomplished before this. They are exasperated at the result of the Battle of Miletus and the death of Chalkideus. They do not stop to consider there was no Lacedæmonian fleet in these waters at that time and previously, and that the Athenians had come out in unexpected force. In short, that what has happened or not happened was inevitable. Your friend Endius was not re-elected and you made many enemies when you were in the ascendant. King Agis had his way. I am warning you because if I obeyed there would be fury here. I should alienate Persia, Miletus, Chios, perhaps others, and that I cannot afford to do. The ephors do not see that such a deed might be the extinction of all our hopes in Ionia, and I must think for them. But you must never betray me."

Alcibiades smiled and gave him his hand, not in friendship but in the customary Greek gesture of sealing a compact. "I shall never betray you, Astyochus," he said, "and I thank you whatever your motive. I will add that this news is not unexpected, and that I am quite prepared."

After a few words with Tiy and his host, and orders to Saon, who had returned to his service, he sent for his horse and rode leisurely along the windings of the Meander to the city of Magnuysia where Tissaphernes was in residence. His estate was a vast one under the very shadow of Mount Mycale, highly cultivated, with many terraces, flowering shrubs, artificial lakes, orchards of olive and fruit trees, woods, and parks. Even the lower slopes of that stark and frowning mountain were terraced with opulent flowers. The river flowed past the walls of his palace, an immense but graceful structure gaily painted. The capital of Lydia was Sardis, but Tissaphernes preferred the

climate of the coast, and Magnuysia was but fifteen miles from Miletus.

Alcibiades as he rode through the town with its beautiful Ionic temples and bustling market-place, so different, with its trousered turbaned men, from that of Miletus, paused for a moment before the statue of Themistocles, to whom this city, fifty-eight years ago, had been given as a place of residence ; an exile like himself, he too had fled to the court of a friendly Satrap.

He lifted his helmet, smiling whimsically. "Bid me welcome, O greatest of all Strategoi," he said. "If I also find a grave in foreign soil may my friends be as kind as yours and take my ashes back to our City of the Violet Crown."

He found Tissaphernes sitting in a little summer house on the shore of a lake reading a volume of Sophocles ; a peaceful scene, thought Alcibiades ironically, with swans sailing lazily and peacocks strutting on a terrace beyond. A quiet haven !

The Satrap laid down his roll and looked up with a smile, for never had he enjoyed any man's company half as well. They had dispensed with flowery preliminaries and he asked quickly : "What has happened, Alcibiades ? Something perturbs you."

Alcibiades threw himself on a pile of cushions and made a grimace. "Nothing unexpected. The blow has fallen. Agis has sent me a cup of hemlock to drink, but it is still brimming. I received a swift warning——"

"And came to me ! That is as it should be. We will now work together. I appoint you my Grand Vizier." He laughed playfully. "As long as you were with the Lacedæmonians they commanded your loyalty, but now that they have treated you with base ingratitude and injustice, my hand is free, and I know you will show loyalty to the Great King alone. Is it not so ? Are you not here to become my adviser and friend ? "

"I accept the post of Grand Vizier," said Alcibiades, equally playful and serious. "My advice and my efforts shall be for you alone. Perfidious Sparta!" he burst out, giving way to wrath for the first time. "How different from Athens! She too would have had my life, but only after a fair trial before the dicastery. These barbarians would give me the cup without a chance to defend myself."

"But it does not send your affections winging back to Athens?" asked the Persian silkily.

"No, I do not love her. Far from it. But it may be—however—I must talk with Tiy first. She clarifies my ideas. Our present policy should be—and that is what I have been revolving as I rode to your hospitality—should be to direct this war in a manner that will result in the exhaustion of both—and ultimate victory for Persia."

"Ah!" The Satrap's eyes glittered. He recognized the subtle guidance of Tiy in those words. "Yes, a good policy—a good policy—and one that my own mind has been moving toward. But they do not seem inclined to do much in the way of fighting. The Athenians are building a fort on Chios; there has been one small battle, and a few engagements between squadrons. But with two navies in the Ægean——" He shrugged expressively.

"The longer they put off a great battle the better. A speedy decision would mean strength to the victor. A long-drawn campaign causes discontent and desertion among the soldiers and seamen. I have a plan by which you can fritter away the strength of the Lacedæmonians and their allies. The Athenians will work their own ruin, and you will call up your navy at the right moment."

"Your plan?" The Satrap's sleepy eyes had grown suddenly alert.

"You have paid the soldiers a drachma a head—somewhat irregularly! Reduce it by half. You can

say the Great King has not replenished your treasury and you are paying them out of your own chests. The soldiers will be indifferent for the present, for they have not yet spent the booty of Iasus, but they will be all the more importunate later. Meanwhile, bribe Astyochus and the other Generals not only to agree to this decrease of payment, but to avoid action. The Spartans affect to despise wealth but no men are so greedy for it. Few Spartans that cannot be bought ! Send for them to come here—and then leave them to me."

"That I will do," said Tissaphernes with indolent enthusiasm. "There is nothing I like less than those ill-mannered Spartans." He frowned as he recalled the dogged insistence of Theramenes and Astyochus who had compelled him somewhat to modify that treaty so guilelessly accepted by the former General and his adviser. "Not one of them shall ever sit with me in the intimacies of the repast."

Alcibiades shuddered. "I sat with them at mess for two years and over. If it hadn't been for Tiy I should have degenerated into a boor, and unfitted to sit at table with Nicander—or with the Right Hand of the Great King."

"Not even an Ionian has the polish of Alcibiades." The two exchanged compliments occasionally, in spite of their frank intimacy. "And Tiy must come here. I will place one of the larger summer-houses at her disposal. You shall have a wing in my palace and live in the state that becomes you. I like not that plain green uniform, nor the simple tunic or mantle you wear at banquets. This is a great court and Alcibiades will be its chief ornament. And now let us talk of *Œdipus*. I heard it superbly given in Miletus last year, and know nearly every word of it."

"So do I." Alcibiades gratefully banished affairs of state. "Let us recite it. I will be the king——"

"No, I should like to be the king. It is my favourite part."

"And mine!"

They wrangled with some pepper in their playfulness until Alcibiades suggested decision by lot. Tissaphernes drew the coveted rôle, and for the rest of the afternoon the surface of their minds was exercised very pleasantly, the while the depths of those minds were a dark swirl shot with sinister light.

VII

TIY and her slaves were established in a "summer-house," the size of a small palace, situated on a lake and surrounded by a pine wood. It had been built for a favourite of the Satrap, but her charms had palled in due course, and she had been relegated to the harem.

The wing placed at the disposal of Alcibiades was a magnificent suite of ten rooms, and fourteen slaves waited upon him, besides Saon. He had a guard of tall black men clad in gaudy tunics and feathered headdress, who stopped gossiping when he appeared, clanged their spears on the marble floor, and stood at attention.

He appeared now in long robes of brilliant colour richly embroidered, the sleeves hanging almost to the ground, and on his head he wore a cap stiff with gold. When he slept slaves fanned him. When he entered a room they prostrated themselves. His gustatory whims were consulted daily by an obsequious steward, and the rarest wines were placed before him at every meal.

It was such luxury as he had only heard of until now, but he adapted himself as readily as to the Spartan smock and black broth, indeed would have revelled in it, had his mind been empty of intrigue. The courtiers, as splendidly attired as himself, treated him with

deference, whatever the jealousy that may have rent them. He suppressed his arrogance and won several of them to friendship. There were revels at night when the Satrap, who was no debauchee, was in the humour, and Alcibiades' spirits soared on these occasions, and he gave generously from an inexhaustible fund of stories and songs. Sometimes the courtiers were banished from these banquets, and the concubines —never the wives—of the harem admitted, lovely creatures from all parts of the Eastern world, toward whom Alcibiades observed the utmost decorum. Tissaphernes, charmed with his behaviour, and unwilling to subject him to temptation, proved himself the perfect host.

Tiy never crossed the threshold of the palace. She was not a man nor yet an houri. She was that curious anomaly, a woman of brains and presumable chastity, of rank and independence. Tissaphernes admired her intensely, quite aside from those talents that made her invaluable to Persia, and he and Alcibiades spent many hours in her company, reclining on the terrace of her house or sailing the pleasure barge on her lake. What the relationship might be between these two delightful people was a matter of indifference to him. He never would have dared make love to her had he wished, but it was doubtful if this audacious young Greek had it in him to fear man or woman. That was of no consequence, however. Her influence over him was supreme, and she used it in the interest of the Great King. Love would never weaken her. She had a great part to play, and he knew that it gave her boundless enjoyment, for she was intelligent above all things, and these Egyptian women looked upon men as he upon the favourites of the harem : toys for an idle hour.

Moreover, she well knew that if she betrayed Persia her estates would be confiscated and she would find her last bed on the floor of the lake, a silk cord about her

neck. Let her play with this young god as much as she liked.

Alcibiades was acutely aware of the terrible danger in which she stood; surrounded by a thousand eyes, and more than one pair of ears that understood Greek. For that reason he rarely sought her alone, and when he did they talked in whispers in the middle of the lake. No one cared whether they were lovers or not. At times he argued with her in one of the doorless rooms or on the terrace, for the benefit of whoever might be listening, and he permitted himself to be convinced after much airing of his own opinions and stubborn resistance. As far as they knew no watch was set upon them, but the Asiatic way and mind were never absent from their calculations.

It was a month after his arrival that Alcibiades received the Generals in a vast room with walls and floors of pink marble. The doorways were hung with crimson damask; there were deep rugs, tapestries woven with antelopes whose horns were like immense saws. Slaves, who understood no language but their own, waved fans of peacock feathers at the ends of poles.

The Lacedæmonians and the allied Generals blinked when they saw Alcibiades in all his magnificence lolling on a pile of cushions. He did not invite them to sit, and they stood before him, almost humble in their rough uniforms. Hermokrates alone wore a blue embroidered cloak, as became a Syracusan.

Alcibiades used no diplomacy. He despised them too thoroughly, and all that lay behind them.

"I represent the Satrap," he said. "Hereafter I transact all business with Greeks of whatever state. In listening to me you are listening to him, and my decrees are his. He will no longer pay the men a drachma a day. In the first place he has been giving out of his private treasury, for the Great King has sent

no money and no excuses. He will pay them half a drachma, no more. I have advised this in any case. The Athenians know better than to pay their men more than half a drachma a day. It spoils discipline, and leads them into self-indulgence and extravagance."

The Generals broke into vociferous remonstrance, but Alcibiades would not argue with them.

"Take it or leave it," he said curtly. "If the former, you will not be the ones to suffer. The Satrap's chests are by no means exhausted. He also wishes inaction for the present—until he can bring up the Phœnician fleet. You will find it to your interest to fall in with his plans."

He saw the eyes of the Peloponnesians glisten, but the stern face of the Syracusan did not relax. He was a rich man in a city of rich men and Persian money had no temptation for him.

"I throw the disgraceful offer of the Satrap in his face," he exclaimed in wrath. "Tell him my men must be paid a drachma a day. I shall take no less."

"You will take what he gives you, for the present," said Alcibiades coolly, although Hermokrates was the only one of them all he respected. "If the Great King keeps his promise Tissaphernes may change his mind, for he is very generous. And if you choose to return home with your twenty-two triremes, that is a matter for you to settle with the Lacedæmonians. It is naught to me."

Hermokrates strode from the room, and Alcibiades looked at the others with a satiric smile. They were all from oligarchical states—Oligarchs who dwelt ever on the evils and corruptions inherent in democracy!

"Well," he said, "what is your price?"

"It will never be known in Lacedæmonia—or elsewhere?" Astyochus spoke in a sibilant whisper.

"I am no tale-bearer," said Alcibiades haughtily. "What takes place in this room will be repeated only by yourselves."

They bargained for some time, but finally went away well satisfied. Alcibiades spat where they had stood.

VIII

He went directly to Tissaphernes, who was sitting in his summer-house drinking sherbet and reading the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes.

"Well," he said lazily, "did you dispose of those swine?"

Alcibiades repeated the conversation. The Satrap shrugged when told of the attitude of Hermokrates. "Let him return to Syracuse," he said. "So much the better."

"I am to receive the Chians to-morrow and shall inform them they are to expect nothing at all. They no longer pay tribute to Athens and are quite able to meet their own expenses in this war. They are the richest of the Greeks, and I shall make them ashamed of themselves."

Tissaphernes was in high good humour, and Alcibiades made the next move in the deep game he was playing. He and Tiy had held a long conversation in the middle of the lake the night before while he was lying at her feet in the moonlight, and any jealous spy would have inferred that he was murmuring his love. They had decided the time was ripe to sound the Satrap on a subject heretofore ignored.

He drank a glass of sherbet and threw himself back on the cushions, removed his cap and ran his hand through his hair. His brows were knit. His brilliant eyes, capable of so infinite a range of expression, were those of a man suddenly plunged into profound and perplexing thought. The Satrap looked at him curiously. He knew that something was coming, and was not as unprepared as Alcibiades may have believed. He well understood not only the ambitions of this young Athenian, but his natural impatience.

"Tissaphernes," began Alcibiades slowly, "both sides will be exhausted if our methods are followed—that is—if——"

"Well—if?"

"It is possible that at any moment the Lacedæmonians will send a fleet to the Ægean that could annihilate the Athenians in one great battle. And then you would have them to deal with. It is possible also the Generals would be less corruptible than these—who may be replaced at any moment."

"Yes, that is possible. And you have an alternative? What is it?"

"What I have to propose is as much to your advantage as to mine—and that it will be to mine I do not deny. It is better you come to some understanding with Athens. If she were enabled to keep her maritime allies and dependencies she would willingly resign the Asiatic Greeks to the Great King. Sparta has always frowned upon Empire and could not consistently deprive any state of autonomy. She has no fear of your army or navy, and, if she wins the war, will make all this coast and all these islands autonomous, merely demanding their allegiance and resources in case of another war. No doubt of that. You would either be forced to submit or be at war with her constantly. If the former you would be exactly where you are now, and time and treasure wasted."

"Yes—that may be true—but Athens, ruled by a democracy—will never negotiate with Persia." And he watched his friend and adviser intently.

"Ah!" Alcibiades sat up. "That is the point. The Demos must be overturned and the Oligarchs restored to the power they enjoyed before Cleisthenes, and again to some extent before Pericles."

"Can it be done?" asked the Satrap dubiously. "The Demos is strong in Athens."

"The Demos is discouraged in spite of these small triumphs in the Ægean. They fear ultimate failure.

What allies and subject states they have left pay tribute irregularly, for they cannot enforce it. They know the power of the Peloponnesus, to say nothing of Bœotia. With subtlety they may be managed. I consulted with Tiy last night and we developed this plan together. The Athenians in command of the fleet are Oligarchs for the most part. If you agree, I shall enter into a correspondence with them, and also with the commanders of the triremes I know personally, and suggest to them that I can divert the wealth of Persia from Lacedæmonia to Athens. But only on two conditions: they must conspire to overturn the Demos, and succeed. I shall tell them it is impossible for me to negotiate with a body to which I am notoriously hostile. On the other hand, the Oligarchs are of my own class, and practically all my friends are among them, whatever their temporary politics. They have resented my exile and they know of my intimacy with you. What the Demos would doubt they will believe. I might not be recalled at once to Athens, but my pardon would not be long delayed, and a few months would see me in power—and your ambitions realized."

Tissaphernes' eyes grew very sleepy as he gazed out at the drifting swans. It would do no harm to promise his aid, and then when Alcibiades had amused himself long enough, withdraw on any pretence that occurred to his fertile mind. There was always the Great King to fall back on. His purpose at present was to keep this charming companion interested and contented.

"A good scheme," he said after a proper interval for deliberation. "Open your correspondence and promise what you will. I like the Athenians as much as I detest the Lacedæmonians. When I bring up the Phœnician fleet we will dispose of them summarily." He sighed. "What a resourceful mind you have, dear Alcibiades. Such a far-sighted policy would

never have occurred to me. Persia will be supreme in Asia, and Alcibiades in Hellas—our hands joined in friendship across the Ægean Sea." And he smiled with affectionate candour at his friend, now lying at ease among his cushions, and began to talk of Aristophanes.

But if he was playing a deep game, Alcibiades was playing a deeper, and one that even a Tissaphernes would have been the last to suspect.

IX

Alcibiades resolved to write first to Peisander although he was the only democrat among the Generals. But he knew him to be an unscrupulous politician who would subvert either party to his interests. He left him to deal with the other Generals but wrote to several of the petty officers, who had been members of his club. Only a few days passed before Peisander requested a personal interview. There had been an immediate consultation between the Generals, and they had caught eagerly at his proposal to overturn the Demos, backed by the gold of the Great King. The exhaustion of the treasury, after so much loss of tribute and the revenues from the mines and farms, had caused the war to bear heavily on the rich men. The thousand talents laid aside by Pericles were devoted to the building of triremes, of which they now had one hundred and twenty-eight. The Ecclesia would consent to its use for no other purpose, and there were the seamen and soldiers to be fed, and pacified by payments however irregular. There had been no recourse save to tax the wealthy.

Could the Demos be overturned the revenues of the State would be in their hands, and Persia would pay the expenses of the war. Victory over the Peloponnesians would be swift, and they too forced to pour money into the treasury. The resubjugation of their

former allies and dependencies would follow as a matter of course.

A deputation headed by Peisander went to the court of the Satrap to receive assurance in person, and returned elated with their reception by Alcibiades, whose magnificence was a sufficient evidence of his power. Neither had he omitted to mention that if his proposals were declined Persian aid would be thrown to the Lacedæmonians. The result would be extinction for Athens.

The Oligarchs, both Generals and commanders, then went to work on the soldiers and seamen, the greater number of them humble members of the Demos, and at first met with nothing but indignant protest. But they were soon talked over. They knew the condition of the treasury, knew the war might last for years; or, with the full revenues of Persia thrown into the balance against them, there was nothing to expect but annihilation. Even a thousand talents would not last for ever, and immense sums had already been spent; timber was brought from Thrace and foreign shipbuilders employed. If they relinquished democracy their troubles would be over, and they might be a great empire once more. They gave a sullen consent.

The Oligarchs had formed themselves into a club, and they sent Peisander, now avowedly one of them, to Athens to lay the matter before the Ecclesia.

There was a terrific scene when he stood on the Bema and urged the restoration of Alcibiades as the price of Persian aid. The enemies of the exile, led by the Androcles, protested as violently as outraged Initiates. But the arguments of Peisander were irrefutable. "What hope have you," he asked them, "of salvation for the city when the Peloponnesians have a naval force fully equal to ours, together with a great number of allied cities, and when the King and Tissaphernes are supplying them with money, while we have no money left? What hope have you of salvation unless you

can persuade the King to come over to our side?" When he had reduced them to silence he went on. "Well, then, that object cannot possibly be obtained unless we conduct our political affairs in the future in a much more moderate way, and put the powers of the government in the hands of the few, who will ask no payment for their services; and unless we recall—to the army at least—Alcibiades, the only man now living competent to do the business."

Peisander was an able man if not an eloquent one, and spoke long and speciously, dwelling upon the large amount of money required yearly to pay the six thousand dicasts and the Council of Five Hundred. Nor did he fail to point out that the people had it in their power to change the form of government again at any time. He finally received the same reluctant acquiescence that had been wrung from the men at Samos.

He and ten others were ordered to go to Ionia and confer with Alcibiades and the Satrap. Before he left he interviewed the clubs and urged them to immediate action; ably seconded by Critias, than whom there was no more restless spirit in Athens. They met with little resistance, for the ambitions and disaffections of these men were identical with those of the Oligarchs at sea. Whether Alcibiades could keep his promises or not was a matter of comparative indifference to them (and no one had known better than he that this would be the case); he had served his purpose, and by a vote in the Ecclesia they were enabled to seize the reins of power. Led by Antiphon, one of the most brilliant men in Athens, debarred from public life by his profession as sophist, but of immense private influence, the Oligarchs, at first denying any intention of interfering with the Ecclesia, and the regular processes of government, soon threw off the mask, intimidated and expelled the presiding Council of Five Hundred, announced themselves the

true government to be known henceforth as the Four Hundred, asserted they were backed by a mysterious body of citizens they called the Five Thousand, and, to ensure themselves against interference, inaugurated a reign of terror. A hired body of assassins, imported from foreign cities, struck swiftly and silently at prominent citizens who had denounced them and threatened trouble. Androcles was one of the first to fall a victim. Both furious and terrified he had left the oligarchical party and employed his eloquence on the Bema in the vain hope of inducing the Ecclesia to rescind the vote. For this defection, and for his virulent enmity to Alcibiades, he was promptly dispatched. Nor were the people permitted to meet in assembly again.

The murderers could not be traced, and what added to the prevalent terror was the fact that many members of the Four Hundred were former democrats and moderates. The time came when no man trusted his neighbour, nor dared to utter his opinions aloud. They barred their houses at night, and ventured abroad only in groups, armed with daggers. But dissensions were already appearing in that body now in control of every branch of the government. The moderates were dissatisfied with the extremists, and if there was a hush in the streets, loud words might be heard in the Council Chamber. Antiphon and Theramenes the Moderate, a man of great ability, but shifty and cowardly, were at swords' points from the first.

X

PEISANDER, meanwhile, flushed with victory, returned to Samos and with his envoys crossed over at once to the mainland. But events had moved too swiftly for Tissaphernes, who was also disconcerted by another battle between the Athenian and the Chian fleet, in

which the latter had been routed with terrible slaughter. When he heard of the approach of Peisander and the Athenian envoys he sent for Alcibiades and told him apologetically it was impossible for him to give these men definite assurances as he had not yet heard from the Great King. He had been obliged to write first to the "Council of Persians" in Sardis and obtain their approval. They were still debating and had sent him no definite answer.

"Ah!" said Alcibiades. "Ah! Well, leave them to me. Be present and say nothing."

He received the Athenians in the pink marble room, and this time standing. Tissaphernes sat on a divan among many cushions as became a viceroy of the sovereign of all Persia.

After Peisander had related the story of his success with the Ecclesia and the promise of the clubs to take swift and energetic action, Alcibiades congratulated them warmly, and then assumed the air of a curt man of business.

"Of course it is understood," he said, "that the Athenians must make certain concessions to the Great King."

"That is understood," said Peisander heartily. "We come fully prepared."

"He requires that you cede all the neighbouring islands, including Samos, Chios, and Lesbos. Nothing less will satisfy him."

There was a movement of consternation among the envoys, for such a concession would mean the restoration of Persian power in the Ægean. They withdrew to consult among themselves, but returned in a few moments to announce that although the demand of the Great King went far beyond anything they had anticipated, they were prepared to meet it.

Alcibiades and Tissaphernes had also been conferring, although they hardly expected that any self-respecting and patriotic Athenian would agree to such

a renunciation. Alcibiades concealed his surprise and replied in the same autocratic tones :

" But there is another condition. I had not time to mention it before you left the room. The Satrap, who represents the Great King, as you know, and understands his policies, demands that the Treaty of Callias, made forty years ago between Pericles and Artaxerxes, be abrogated, and the Great King free to build ships in unlimited number and keep them sailing as he thinks fit in all this new part of his territory."

" And extinguish the maritime power of Athens ! " cried Peisander, when the room had ceased to whirl about him. " Throw her to the mercy of Persia ! What good would it do us to defeat the Lacedæmonians ? What good to overturn the Demos and seize the power for ourselves ? How long before we should have a Satrap in Athens ? You have juggled with us, Alcibiades. For your own purpose, whatever that may be. You are no Oligarch. Liar ! Traitor ! Deceiver ! " The room resounded with invectives hurled not only by Peisander but by the ten envoys who saw their hopes crushed and themselves played with by this exile secure in the favour of the Great King. And Alcibiades had never looked more impassive, arrogant, sure of himself.

He raised his hand finally and the Athenians were politely surrounded by the guard and ushered out.

" Well, it has been an amusing comedy," said Tissaphernes, yawning. " And you no doubt have been as amused as I. What next ? "

Alcibiades shrugged. " Let them write the next act. A pity we cannot be invisible in Athens and watch the drama there, although I do not place too much faith in the rosy hopes of Peisander."

Tissaphernes rose. " Let us to the summer-house, sherbert, and Aristophanes. Although I enjoyed myself, the loud voices of those men have given me a headache."

Said Tiy that night as they drifted on the lake, "Have you no fear, Alcibiades, that you have started something you cannot control? Remember your hopes before Syracuse."

Alcibiades looked at her with a confident smile. "When I returned to Athens after the Battle of Mantinea—it was when you had deserted me—I told the Ecclesia they must expect a political upheaval in Argos, but reminded them that no precipitate oligarchical revolution built upon a paralysed Demos could endure more than a few months. Men given sudden power are always intemperate and work their own ruin. Wait and see, dear Tiy. This time Alcibiades has made no mistake."

XI

He had been exact in all his calculations. When the envoys returned to Samos and shouted their wrath, the men were convinced that Alcibiades was really favourable to the democracy, the same powerful friend as of old, and had fooled these Oligarchs for his own purposes.

Everything favoured his plans. Before the Council of Four Hundred remembered the army and had time to dispatch a soothing report of their performances, a soldier escaped from the city to Samos and told an exaggerated story of the terrible vengeance visited upon all who defied the Oligarchs. "Men were publicly scourged in the street, their wives and children in the house. The new government designed to seize and imprison the relatives of the men of the fleet and put them to death if the army refused to obey orders from Athens."

If it had not been for the cooler heads among them, the men, so violent was the excitement, would have executed their own Oligarchs summarily. But their love of moderation and justice was appealed to, they

were exhorted not to put themselves on a par with the butchers in Athens, and their anger gave way to a wave of exalted patriotism. They met in an immense assembly in the theatre on the mountain above the city and passed a resolution that they were the true Athens, took oath to uphold their beloved democracy and maintain harmony and friendship with one another; to have no dealings with the Four Hundred, and to prosecute the war with the Peloponnesians. No matter what suffering might be their portion, they would be true to their vows and to one another. They were the guardians of the constitution and the upholders of what was left of the Empire.

"The city has revolted from *us*," boomed the commander Thrasybulus, who had the loudest voice in the army; an able man who a few years hence was to play a decisive part in the history of his country. "But let not this abate our courage; for they are only the lesser force; we are the greatest, and self-sufficing. We have here the whole navy of the State, whereby we can assure ourselves the contributions of our dependencies. We have the hearty attachment of Samos, second in power only to Athens herself. . . . Alcibiades, if we assure him a safe restoration, will cheerfully bring the alliance of Persia to sustain us; and even if the worst comes to the worst and all other hopes fail us, our powerful naval force will always enable us to find places of refuge in abundance."

The crux of his speech and those of other influential officers was the recall of Alcibiades. There was some opposition, but mainly on religious grounds, and flowing from their respect for a solemn decree passed by a democratical tribunal. But his repulse of the Oligarchs had impressed them deeply; they believed that his sincere love of democracy had either caused him to relent and to persuade the Satrap to give them no help in their nefarious designs, or that he had deliberately plotted to discredit these bad men and

show them up. They concluded to forget the Mysteries.

The oligarchical Generals and several commanders were deposed and sent home. Others were elected in their place, among them Thrasybulus; another was Thrasyllus, who had also moved them by his eloquence. The former went over to the court of the Satrap and returned with Alcibiades (once more in uniform and helmet), and the assembly greeted their old hero in the theatre. Never had he been accorded a greater reception on the Pnyx. They cheered until they could cheer no more.

He had wrung a promise from Tissaphernes to support the Athenians "as soon as he was convinced of their goodwill toward himself." He was "ever suspicious of democracy." Alcibiades, to whom sincerity ever lent an irresistible appeal, had pleaded with him until he wept, and vowed he would sacrifice his last daric, and melt down his silver bed, should this dramatic sacrifice prove a necessity.

Alcibiades knew just how trustworthy he was, that his dearest dream was to exhaust both armies; but there was no doubt he had been impressed by the spirit of the Athenians in Samos, and may have concluded to take what he could get and be thankful. It would be long before those men would succumb to exhaustion! They could forage for food and money on the islands, and with Alcibiades in command it was more than possible they would conquer the Peloponnesians.

At all events he had given his promise, and Alcibiades made the most of it to that listening multitude, hanging on his words. It must serve whether truth or not. His fiery denouncement of the Four Hundred was far more eloquent than anything within the limited vocabulary of the new Generals, and completed his ascendancy over the Demos. They elected him a General then and there. There was little doubt as to who would be the real commander of the fleet, but

even ambitious men like Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus were willing to defer to his superior abilities and experience.

XII

Tiy was ordered to move to Samos and keep her eye on Alcibiades, using as ever her influence in the cause of Persia, but directed by events. Alcibiades established her in a luxurious house that had been the property of an exiled Oligarch. The city, partly on the shore, partly rising in the form of an amphitheatre on the mountain behind, faced the mainland but a mile away, the walls and towers by which it was surrounded commanding a fine view of other cities and mountains. It had been built by the Tyrant Polycrates a hundred years before, and no expense spared to make it the most beautiful city in Ionia with magnificent public buildings and temples filled with works of art, a theatre, an aqueduct as famous as itself, houses surrounded by gardens, public parks, and the largest temple to Hera in the world. A Greek city, but too close to Asia wholly to have escaped her influence. The buildings were reminiscent of Athens but barbaric in size and colour, and the dress of the men and women even more startling than in Miletus.

The palms in the court of Tiy's house had died of neglect, but there were statues and pottery, many marble chairs and benches to give it beauty. Tiy, who had grown accustomed to luxury once more, sent to the bazaars for cushions to replace those destroyed by the elements.

"Thank Zeus we are away from spying eyes and that old liar!" said Alcibiades fervently on the night of her arrival as they sat by the fountain. "Even in Miletus I was never sure, but here I could almost believe I am in Athens—and you—you—look exactly as you did on the night when I said good-bye before leaving for Sicily."

The nightingales were singing, the moon rode high. Tiy, weary of stiff brocades, wore a white chiton bound by a red sash and a heavy gold net hanging loose to her shoulders. She even wore a duplicate of the lost scarab, for King Amenhotep had had a large number engraved to commemorate his marriage.

She changed the subject hastily. "You have much to accomplish before you see Athens again—although I hear these men wish you to take the fleet to Piræus at once and rescue their families and friends. But—will you ?"

"I should think not ! Leave the Ægean, all Ionia, to the Lacedæmonians ? That would be the last of our Empire. Samos is ours, the greater part of Lesbos and Chios. What would we have left when we returned ? The Hellespont would have gone with the rest. Here they stay whether they like it or not."

She watched him intently. "But you may sacrifice your popularity—greater than ever, were that possible. If you balk them their love may turn to hate, for they are wild with anxiety."

The hard lines came into his face, almost boyish a moment before. "When a man becomes a General in command of an armament and with the responsibilities of both present and future in his hands, he is no longer an independent citizen but a public servant. I had thought of nothing but myself since I left the fleet in Sicily until two days ago when I was recalled and placed in power by my countrymen. They shall do as I say or I serve in the ranks."

"Ah !" she exclaimed. "I knew you were truly great !"

His face relaxed and he smiled into her eyes. "Nor shall I return to Athens until I have erected many trophies. Even were the Four Hundred already fallen—and it is too soon for that—and the Athenians in the city clamouring for me, I should not go now—quite aside from presenting Ionia to the Lacedæmonians.

Alcibiades must redeem himself and return to Athens a conquering hero and invincible, not an old favourite forgiven because time has dimmed his offence and others have done worse. They could hardly avoid regarding me with suspicion. Even these men harbour doubts, and Zeus knows they have cause. But after I have led them to victory once or twice they will forget."

"If only Tissaphernes will remain neutral! I fear his double dealing."

"He'll bear watching. The Lacedæmonians will get at him, no doubt of that. But I can always talk him over when I have his ear—to the extent of countervailing their influence at all events. We can do without him if he fails to keep his promises. The islands feed the men, and although they have no money for their pleasures, the Samians are very generous, and there is always the hope of conquest and booty."

He sprang to his feet, and walked back and forth twice, then to the end of the aula, returning more slowly. He paused abruptly in front of her.

"Do you ever think of our future, Tiy?" he demanded. "I gave it little thought at that cursed court, for my head was too full of plotting, and it was an unnatural life anyhow. But I am an Athenian again——"

"You amused yourself well," she interrupted him with irony. "And you were almost as Persian as Tissaphernes."

"I always make the most of the moment; a part of my mind is adaptable, and I enjoy novelty. But you haven't answered my question. You are yourself again. You never were in Asia. Not even in Miletus. You were as impassive as your Sphinx even when we were alone on the lake at night."

"Plotting!"

"Yes, plotting. There was no time to be lost, and although you do not conceive and direct my con-

spiracies as that Persian imagines, you are my second self, and Zeus knows I need your advice and sympathy. —I wonder," he asked, diverted for a moment, "what part he thought you played in my recall."

"He knows nothing of your correspondence with Thrasybulus. Saon was too clever for him. He thinks you were recalled spontaneously—as you were in great part. He believes you to have been as astonished as himself. He was disconcerted, no doubt, but your fascination for him is so great that he is hardly surprised at the love of the Athenians, or their profound belief in your abilities. I think he means to be guided by events. He will crush you if it is to his interest, and if he can, for friendship is not in him; although he would do more for you possibly than for any one he has ever known."

Alcibiades laughed. "If he were an honest man I could have done nothing with him. And so far he has served me well. . . . But not another word of him to-night. Answer my question."

Tiy moved restlessly. "You ask of our future. Why should it differ from the past? They will see that I always follow you. Save when you are off with the fleet looking for battle, we can be as much together as of old——"

He interrupted her harshly. "It is not enough! You would not believe I loved you in Sparta. I hardly knew, myself. But I know now. I love you and I swear I will be faithful to you always."

"I wonder! Not so much will you be faithful, as if you love me. How can there be room for love in that head of yours always seething with intrigue and ambition? You have just admitted you hardly thought of me for many months until to-night——"

"I thought of you always even when I did not think of you—if you know what I mean. You were always there—somewhere in the back of my mind—there was always the longing for the time when all this plotting

and uncertainty would be over and we could live together in peace."

"Alcibiades longing for peace! No, you are not old enough for that yet. And peace is far in the future. I know you better than you know yourself. You merely want something you have not been able to attain. I am the only woman who has ever resisted you—and you must conquer all women as all men."

"No! That is not it!" His tones had deepened with sincerity and his eyes flashed with indignation. "You should understand me—and you misjudge me! You, of all women! It may be this is no time to think of love. I have so many dark responsibilities looming that I may be forced to put you out of my mind for days—months—Zeus knows. If you had seen me with other women you would know I love you, if only because I express myself so badly. You are the only woman I do not know how to make love to. I find myself wishing all the preliminaries were over and we had been lovers long enough to have ceased all discussion—or that I had the assurance to take you by storm. But I am still a little afraid of you—you are so different—so much of an enigma still—sometimes I wish that if you intend to resist me for ever you would go back to Egypt where I should never see you again."

"Do you really wish that, Alcibiades? It could be managed. I could send an eminent Samian doctor over to Tissaphernes to swear I had an incurable disease, and must draw my last breath on Egyptian soil——"

"No, no! No, no! I cannot do without you. And the idea is preposterous. He has only to come over and look at you."

"There are pigments. I could change my face in an hour, and compel the sympathy of even a Tissaphernes."

"Talk nonsense no longer! You are only putting me off. Either you do not love me and enjoy the

game too much to give it up, or you do not believe in me even now. Which is it ? "

She dipped her hand in the fountain and regarded the water as it fell from her fingers. " Perhaps the game," she said.

" I don't believe it ! I believe you fear to give yourself—that in love you might be dominated. You glory in being mistress of yourself. You have been out of Egypt long enough to know what love is. You are ten thousand times more of a woman than when you made your haughty entrance into Athens, but you have not lost your old pride in your sex—not that I would wish to dominate you," he added eagerly. " I have never been arrogant nor domineering with you, nor ever should be. I admitted long since you were my equal—something I never admitted to any man. You would be a part of myself but still Tiy."

She did not answer, but continued to look at the water sparkling in the moonlight, and he went on rapidly : " You once said that only in equality could men and women really find happiness. We are equals —when have I ever questioned it ? Not even when we were in Athens and all went well—still less in that intimate life we led after our flight from Thurii. It was an ideal you set for yourself. Why do you hesitate now ? "

" You are sincere now, Alcibiades——"

" Master ! Master ! "

They heard the sound of running feet and Saon burst upon them. " Oh, Master, I was at the Assembly——"

" What do you mean ? How dare you enter my presence unsummoned ? " Alcibiades' eyes were flashing blue lightning and if looks could annihilate Saon would have been a handful of ashes on the marble floor. But the man was too excited to be abashed and tumbled out his news.

" I am sent by Thrasybulus. Envoys have arrived

from Athens. He begs you will come at once. The Assembly is in a terrible state. They wish to go at once to Piræus and will put it to the vote——"

Alcibiades waited to hear no more. He seized his helmet and darted out of the house, forgetting love and Tiy.

XIII

THRASYBULUS knew nothing of Tiy and had been at his wits' end to find Alcibiades when he caught sight of the shrewd interested face of Saon on the outskirts of the Assembly. The envoys had arrived after dark, while Alcibiades was dining with Tiy, and the Assembly had been convened immediately. Although these envoys had vigorously denied the stories brought to Samos by the soldiers who had escaped from Athens, they had only succeeded in convincing the men they were liars and working them up to a pitch of agonized excitement. In vain Thrasybulus had bellowed and Thrasyllus had pleaded. They would sail for Piræus to-morrow and execute vengeance, save their relatives were any left alive.

They were shouting, "Death to the subverters of democracy," and calling for the voting urns, when Alcibiades appeared on the stage of the theatre and commanded them to listen to him. But he was obliged to stand there for two hours wrestling with those frantic and determined men. Only his eloquent appeals to their patriotism, his assurance that one of those envoys was a truthful and honest man, and his threat to resign from the command, finally subdued them. When under the influence of exalted emotion they loved Athens better than themselves, and they well knew his ambition and love of power. They voted to remain where they were and continue the war.

Alcibiades then turned to the terrified envoys, huddled at the back of the stage, and told them to

return to Athens and tell the Four Hundred to betake themselves to private life, and to publish the names of the mythical Five Thousand. With these the army would deal, as they must represent the best of the citizenry remaining in Athens. "Unless you get rid of the Four Hundred expect our vengeance. We know how to deal with you."

"You may also tell them," said Thrasybulus as he marshalled them out and conducted them in safety to their ship, "that Alcibiades is more powerful than ever and it were best not to antagonize him further. Athens has already had a taste of his vengeance and well knows his quality. He alone can save the Empire and he alone deal the final blow if he sees fit. Had he listened to the demands of those men to take the fleet to Athens she might better have given a cup of hemlock to every one of her citizens."

Alcibiades, a few days later, was given another opportunity to demonstrate his power over the Persian Satrap and render an ostensible service, at least, to the Athenians. A short time since Astyochus had been replaced by Mindarus, a far better man in every way. Alcibiades believed him to be incorruptible and that he would lose no time discovering the mystery of the fleet's inaction. He knew Tissaphernes well enough to be sure that wily Persian would make some concession in order to stand well with the new General, for he was not yet prepared to break openly with the Lacedæmonians. He was on the alert and soon learned that the Satrap had promised definitely to bring up the Phœnician fleet he had been dangling as a bait, and invited the Generals to go with him to Aspendus, where it was in harbour.

He was in Aspendus two days later. Once more Tissaphernes succumbed to his wiles, and the Peloponnesian Generals returned in wrath to their own ships.

XIV

It was on a starry night in late autumn that Alcibiades stood on the prow of his flagship, leading a fleet of twenty-five triremes to the north. Time was important and there was no beaching for sleep on land; the hoplites relieved the sailors at the oars. Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus were somewhere off the Thracian Chersonese with the main fleet and might be engaged at any moment with the eighty-four triremes of Mindarus. There had been one battle already, in which the Athenians had been victorious enough to erect a trophy, but they had lost fifteen ships, and although they had captured twenty-one these had been recaptured later by the Lacedæmonians. The engagement had led to nothing. The Peloponnesians had been reinforced, and a swift galley had been dispatched to summon Alcibiades.

The seat of war had shifted to the north in mid-summer. Mindarus, disgusted with Tissaphernes, had made up his mind to accede to the repeated demands of Pharnabazus. He had eluded the vigilance of the Athenian fleet and reached the Hellespont in safety, but had had little peace since from Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus, nor won an engagement to speak of.

Alcibiades had remained behind to subdue Cos and Halicarnassus, and see to the building of forts after the conquest. He had levied heavy contributions on both towns, and in his hold was a plentiful supply of money for the soldiers, unpaid by Athens in spite of the overthrow of the Four Hundred and the administration of the Five Thousand. He would have preferred to go to the north at once, but money was more important at the moment, and there was no prospect of any save in rich island cities. His popularity with the soldiers was undiminished, but he knew it would be measurably enhanced if he were the one to fill their lean pouches. Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus were com-

petent Generals and could do without him for the present.

These months had been crowded not only with action but with news. Theramenes, that able, crafty, treacherous "Moderate," had turned the tables on the Four Hundred and saved his own skin. The greater number had fled. Critias had made his peace with the Five Thousand. Antiphon and Archeptolemus had been executed. Callias had managed to keep out of it somehow, and Cleinias had taken to his bed with a fever that had lasted four months, the exact duration of the usurpers' brief reign. Young Pericles was safe in the Ægean.

Alcibiades paced back and forth on the little deck scanning the horizon for scouting enemy ships. He was as much at peace with the world as it was in that restless driving spirit ever to be at any time. He was an Athenian once more, and the leader of Athenians. He was through with the plotting and lying that had irked his haughty spirit far more than his moral sense, to which, to do him justice, he made scant pretence. He had seen nothing of Tissaphernes since the parting at Aspendus, for he had had no time for the mainland, and the Satrap hardly could compromise himself by a visit to Samos.

Of Tiy he had seen little, but at least she was no longer fearful of flicking an eyelash the wrong way, nor was she bored. He had relatives and friends among the Oligarchs who had been permitted to remain on the island after the revolution, and they were constantly at her house.

After the fall of the Four Hundred she had had all her portable wealth conveyed from Egypt to Athens. Whether this was to be taken as an indication that she intended to marry him eventually, he hardly dared hazard a guess. The conversation of that night when Saon had broken in upon them so rudely had never been resumed. He had not seen her alone again ;

and he had been thankful for that interruption, for this was no time for love-making. It had been the mood of the moment with him, overcome as he was by the sudden release from all caution, and her beauty in that old familiar dress—the moonlight—the nightingale—all the rest of it. And he the least sentimental of men !

She had been right in her reminder there was no room in his head for love. She was always right, that woman, and he wondered he did not hate her ; she was the antithesis of everything he had admired in her sex. Nevertheless, he did not. He loved her. He was as sure of that as of the stars above him. The time must come when that strange impalpable barrier between them would go down.

The Greeks were not self-analytical. It never would have occurred to him to dwell upon the difference of his feeling for this woman from any he had experienced before in his amatory life. Unconsciously he had groped toward the truth once or twice : as if a part of his mind were receptive, in certain irrelative moments, to the influences of a future civilization—perhaps already designed and existent somewhere out in the ether ; but when by slow and imperceptible degrees he was fully aware that he loved her, that was enough for him. How or why or when it began mattered not. If he sometimes found himself wishing he had loved her and her only, always, he dismissed that futility with a shrug. He was too philosophical and too practical to harbour regrets. What was was.

It did occur to him to-night, somewhat whimsically, to wish he were a tragic poet like Sophocles—no, like Euripides, who understood modern women ; then he would know at exactly what moment, after what carefully arranged series of events, fate would hurl them together. It would relieve him of uncertainty, at least !

But he was no poet. He was a man of action, a

man consumed with ambition and lust for glory; he could only wait on events and seize the moment when it came—if it ever came! If these two unusual beings, himself and this woman, were indeed material for the poet, then, by all the canons, must their love end in tragedy. But he brushed the thought aside. He had had tragedy enough in his life. She must be his and she must be always there when he returned to the house of his fathers radiant with new triumphs. There would be intervals of peace, at all events, and much to keep him in Athens.

Athens! When should he see that other siren again? He longed to hear the fishwomen scolding in the market-place, the hooting of the owls at night. It was only five years since he had looked his last on the Acropolis and it seemed an eternity. A wave of passionate home-sickness overwhelmed him, and for the moment he forgot his ambitions, the possible battle of the morrow, even Tiy. He, like the soldiers, was capable of moments of high emotional patriotism, and he raised his helmet to the stars and vowed that no matter what befell he would never betray her again.

It was late on the following afternoon that the purple flag of Alcibiades' trireme turned the tide of a desperate battle. Pharnabazus and his land force were co-operating with the fleet of Mindarus, which had been attacked in the morning by Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus. The battle had raged all day, the Athenians holding their own, although inferior in numbers. With evening had come depression, the undiminished vigour of the Spartan lungs being enough to dishearten weary men, who could see no safety save in retreat.

But that purple flag hove in sight before the short twilight came to precede the darkness and confusion of night. They raised their voices once to shout "Alcibiades! Alcibiades!" and fell to with renewed energy.

His men were fresh and eager for battle. He assumed command and bore down upon that part of the enemy fleet hitherto victorious. Surprised and alarmed, weary themselves, they fled after a short resistance. He compelled them to run their ships ashore, and then attacking them rammed the triremes, broke them up, forcing the crews to land. Even Pharnabazus, although he rode his horse out into the water at the head of his troops in an effort to stay the flight of the allies, was forced to retreat.

It was a complete victory for the Athenians. They captured thirty triremes, and all they had themselves lost in previous battles. Alcibiades erected a trophy on the shore amidst great rejoicing. He then sent permission to the enemy to bury its dead and returned to his ship.

XV

The Peloponnesians would not be enticed out again, and Alcibiades took the fleet up the Hellespont to go into winter quarters at Sestos, a fortified city on the long narrow peninsula known as the Thracian Chersonese; one of the most important of the Athenian possessions, producing as it did enormous quantities of grain.

It was here a month later that he heard of Tissaphernes' arrival at Abydos on the opposite Asiatic shore, where he had scored his notable victory over the Peloponnesian fleet. What had that blackguard come for? To curry favour with the Lacedæmonians no doubt. Curiosity overcame him, and life was dull in winter quarters.

He sent over a herald to announce that he would call on the Satrap of Lydia if granted a safe-conduct. The herald returned with the parchment and assurances of undying affection.

Whatever the sins of Alcibiades he had rarely been

guilty of stupidity. But the violation of a truce was unheard of, and the desire to show himself in all his pride of power, and bearing rich gifts, to this false man whose hospitality he had been compelled to accept, was irresistible. He collected the most important of the jewelled pieces he had seized at Cos, and, accompanied by a splendid retinue of cavalry officers in their scarlet capes, crossed from Europe to Asia without misgivings.

Tissaphernes' camp was pitched outside the city, a small city itself, for he had brought his personal army with him and their tents covered a large area. Alcibiades had been met at the porte by an imposing bodyguard of picked men in gorgeous capes, long embroidered trousers and feathered helmets, to escort him to the presence of the Satrap. The cavalry officers were to be entertained at the mess.

He was ushered into the tent with vast ceremony. There were three outer compartments, all hung with rugs; big black men in crimson uniforms stood at attention. The last pair of curtains was parted and Alcibiades entered alone, the heavy tapestries on their metal rods clicking behind him.

Tissaphernes was seated on his pile of cushions, and he did not rise. Nor did he smile. Alcibiades knew his danger immediately. He shot a quick glance about the tent. On the walls were silhouetted many feathered helmets. The tent was surrounded, the ante-rooms crowded. Escape was impossible.

That he had many faults he would have been the last to deny, had he ever given them a thought, but fear was not in him. He turned to the Satrap with a shrug.

"Well, Tissaphernes," he said, "you have caught me like a fish in a net. What do you propose to do with me?"

The face of the Persian softened a little, for he admired courage, and this man above all men. But

he did not relent. Alcibiades had ceased to be a valuable pawn and become a menace to extension of empire.

"I am sorry," he said apologetically. "But I have orders from the Great King. You must go to Sardis, where you will live in luxury until this war is over, and then be released. No harm will come to you if you make no attempt to escape."

Alcibiades smiled ironically. "And I am to infer the Great King in Susa has had time since yesterday to learn of my projected visit—under a safe-conduct—to your camp?"

"I had a general order. I was to await my opportunity; to force it, if necessary. If you did not pay me a visit of your own will I was to have sent you an invitation, and if you had declined it, I should have managed to get hold of your person in some way. There was always the chance of taking you in battle."

"Yes! I have the habit of being taken in battle! And what of my retinue?"

"We have no object in either holding or harming them. They are not an army, nor yet Alcibiades. They will be permitted to return to Sestos on the morrow."

"Very well. I have been a fool. Tell your king that your fascinations drew me here to-day and saved you much trouble and possibly bloodshed. You will rise even higher in his good graces. Call your guard." He turned on his heel. "And may I have looked my last on you."

He rode out of camp surrounded by forty Persian soldiers in full armour, a tribute, he satirically reflected, to his well-known powers of resource. Escape he would, but his recklessness never took the form of choosing the wrong moment.

They galloped across the plain of Troy, under the shadow of Mount Ida where the fires had been lit by Agamemnon to flash across the sea to Argos, and

took the road along the coast, avoiding the mountains wherever possible. But they were obliged to traverse many gloomy passes, and perhaps the most stark and frowning mountains in the world are in Asia. At all events Alcibiades was willing to believe it. His thoughts were not enviable, aside from his humiliating condition. Gone was the fiction of his ascendancy over the powerful Persian Satrap. Unless in their enthusiastic loyalty the soldiers of the fleet believed his abduction due to fear of his generalship, his prestige might be fatally diminished. However—did he make his escape in time, he could recapture those men in an hour and they would admire him more than ever.

They rode into Sardis on the evening of the third day ; that great city made famous by Crœsus, admirer of Greek art and wisdom, still beloved in Athens for his generosity and appreciation of genius. Here, too, Xerxes had assembled his mighty army for the subjugation of all Hellas. An historic and interesting city, thought Alcibiades ironically, and well worth a visit—as a conqueror.

As a prisoner he was less appreciative, although the imposing city, with its Greek temples and large, light, barbaric buildings, thatched with reeds, its streets swarming with gaily dressed men and veiled women, the conical tombs of kings on the mountain behind, the famed river Pactolus, golden in the evening light, won his admiration for a moment.

Then his gaze darted about, making a rapid map of the principal streets. The dark hours between midnight and dawn, when all but the guard slept, would be the time to make his escape. And it was not too far from the sea.

The palace, similar in style to that at Magnuysia, but built of brick and many times larger, was situated on the banks of the Pactolus, its pleasure gardens extending along "the golden sands." In the background, on a lofty precipitous rock, forming an out-

post of the range of Tmolus, was an impregnable-looking citadel surrounded by a triple wall. He looked apprehensively at that grim fortification. Were he lodged there, escape would be well-nigh impossible; but if Tissaphernes' assurances of luxury had not been as false as the rest of him the palace must be his destination.

And so it proved. After the great brazen gates had clanged behind him, he was led through one immense room after another, with walls of gleaming marble or covered with barbaric hangings, tables littered with gold, silver, and ivory, rugs glittering with precious stones, until he reached the suite which, he inferred from the salaams of his escort, was placed at the disposal of the Satrap's honoured guest.

It was luxurious enough! His feet sank into the deep purple carpets, tapestries covered the walls, chairs and couches were many and comfortable. The supper served immediately was both substantial and delicate. Slaves salaamed before him, and the fierce-looking black guard, in their fantastic costume, treated him with grim respect, and watchful eyes.

He slept soundly that night. The Milesian bed was soft with feathers, and he had had little sleep on the journey. But with the dawn his wits were at work. He had picked up many Persian words during his sojourn at Magnuysia, and he had a pouch full of gold darics strapped to his waist. They had taken his dagger but respected his person.

XVI

In the month that followed, Alcibiades, arrayed in the finest garments in the Satrap's wardrobe—he had been invited to make his choice and appropriated the best—lounged about the gardens or reclined on the cushions of one of the summer-houses, reading, and drinking sherbet, the perfect picture of an indolent

gentleman of leisure at peace with his surroundings. Even the guard, dogging his steps, were deceived by his air of magnificent repose and detachment, and grew weary of watching a man revelling in luxury after the hardships of war. But during those saunterings his languid eyes took in every detail of that park and he could have found his way about it on the darkest night.

At times, and with complete absorption, he played dice, balls, and the Egyptian game of draughts with the officers.

When he announced that his health was suffering for want of his familiar exercise they took him for long rides about the country, an agreeable diversion for themselves, and no harm could come of it when they surrounded him on all sides. It was not long before he discovered that the road to the coast was little travelled, and that at its end lay Clazomenæ, a city he had visited more than once.

In the evenings he was sometimes taken to the public gardens surrounding Lake Gyges, and invited to watch the gay pleasure boats and swans, the young people who came here to worship at the temple of Cybele, goddess of Sardis, and amuse themselves incidentally. Cymbals clanged, nightingales sang, light laughter floated from sheltered spots, fat merchants took their veiled women out in the barges. Not so fascinating a diversion for a man alone, surrounded by a wall of blacks. His thoughts wandered to Tiy; they dwelt upon her with longing, affection, passion. . . .

He was allowed the privacy of his bedroom, but a guard stood at his door all night, and another beyond his window. His first intention had been to bribe this man, but one misstep would be fatal and he renounced the idea. The citadel for him if the man betrayed him, no doubt of that.

He had studied the habits of this giant and observed that after midnight the rigid form began to droop, and more than once a loud snore offended his ear.

A night came when it was evident to his alert eyes that the man had been drinking heavily. He lurched, drew himself up with an air of offended dignity, lurched again, and stood like a black idol in a temple for a full minute. Then yawned and sighed heavily. His head sank to his breast.

The night was very dark.

Alcibiades bit a hole in the soft silken mattress and took out a handful of feathers. Holding them loosely, he stole to the open window and leaning out flung an arm about the man's neck, jerked back his head, and stuffed the feathers into his mouth. While the dazed creature was gasping and choking, he hauled him over the low sill, gave him a violent punch on the jaw, and let him gently down to the carpet. There he bound him hand, foot, and mouth—sashes were plentiful in a Persian wardrobe—removed his dagger, cloak, and feathered head-piece, and a moment later was habited and out of the window, his helmet and uniform under the cloak.

He had visited the stables daily, with no pretence in his love of horseflesh, and he even knew the stall of the horse he was accustomed to ride. The stables were unguarded at night, for who would dare steal from a Satrap ?

Darkness did not hinder him. He knew every inch of the way, and the stall was near the entrance. Ten minutes after he had left his room he was riding the horse across the bridge spanning the river and thence to the western wall of the city. Here he would be challenged, but for this emergency too he was prepared. He had been allowed the freedom of the palace, and in the Satrap's library he had rummaged until he found an important-looking parchment dangling the royal seal. Its contents were indecipherable, but that mattered not. No gatekeeper would presume to scan a royal document.

He had learned more of the Persian language this

last month and carefully committed several sentences to memory. When the watch suddenly appeared before the gates with a lantern, and spear upraised, he spoke in an imperious voice with a strong Persian accent.

"A dispatch has just come from the Great King for the Satrap at Abydos. Open at once on pain of death." And he thrust the parchment under the lantern.

What the formula would be on such an occasion he had not the faintest idea, but relied on his natural authority and the servility of a class used as footstools by the mighty. The man had been aroused from his first heavy sleep, no less heavy for being unlawful, and was but half-awake. He hastened to open the gate.

Alcibiades rode his horse furiously down the long lonely road to the sea, expecting every moment to hear a loud challenge in the rear. But he reached Clazomenæ unpursued and soon after dawn. He went at once to the house where he had lodged shortly after his departure from Lacedæmonia, when he had arrived with an armed invitation to secede from Athens.

Clazomenæ was once more a part of the Empire, and the man who had been his host was both friendly and excitedly interested in this new adventure of the famous Athenian. A galley and rowers were found at once, and before the sun was well over the mountain Alcibiades was on his way to Lesbos. There he collected a squadron of five triremes and sailed for Kardia on the western side of the Chersonese, where, he had been told, the fleet was now stationed.

The frantic cheering that greeted him dispelled all doubts. The soldiers were beside themselves with joy at this unheralded return of their hero—as well and energetic as ever; they had pictured him devoured by rats in a dungeon and never expected to see him again. The Generals, if less demonstrative, were equally thankful, for things had not gone well with them, and they willingly shifted all responsibility to his shoulders.

XVII

THE Peloponnesians had been so heavily reinforced that the Athenian Generals had not dared attempt to maintain their position in the Hellespont. Their own forces were depleted for the time being, as they had sent out flying squadrons to levy contributions of money and provisions wherever they could be found. Theramenes had started some time before from Athens with thirty triremes, but had lingered in Macedonia, assisting its king to lay siege to Pydna ; in the hope, no doubt, of heavy emolument.

Alcibiades sent him a peremptory summons, and although Theramenes was now a great man in Athens, and the exile still an exile in spite of his popularity in the army and his victories, he knew the power of that man and, however grudgingly, believed in his destiny. He dared not disobey and took his thirty triremes to Kardia. Alcibiades at the same time called in the squadrons. His fleet now outnumbered the Peloponnesian.

Scouts had brought him the news that Mindarus had left the Hellespont and was in the harbour of Cyzicus on the island of Proconnessus. This island, formerly a part of the Athenian Empire, had, like Chalcedon, Byzantium, and other cities on the Hellespont and in the Propontis, revolted during the summer and placed itself under the ægis of Lacedæmonia. Pharnabazus, with his army, was also on the island ready to assist in repelling any attack made by the Athenians. Tissaphernes, his object accomplished, had returned to Magnuysia.

Alcibiades summoned the men in assembly and announced his intention of following the Peloponnesians into the Propontis and retaking the island.

" You must prepare for a sea-fight, a land-fight, and a wall-fight," he said in conclusion. " Not only must we recover all these lost cities of the Empire, but in

spite of our efforts we have been able to collect little money. Athens can send us none, for she needs what she has for the building of triremes. Our enemies are well supplied by the Satrap. If you would receive your pay you must fight for it. We can defeat these men with our energy and our superior numbers, and a large share of the booty shall be yours. You have the word of Alcibiades and he has never deceived you."

He might merely have issued an order and they would have followed him, but it was his policy to take them into his confidence; moreover, they were accustomed to exhortations on the eve of battle, and went into it with more ardour when their emotions and self-interest had been properly played upon.

The night was dark and threatening as they sailed up the Hellespont, undetected as they passed Abydos. Proconnessus lay well within the Propontis and off the coast of Phrygia, a convenient meeting-place for Pharnabazus and Mindarus.

As the Athenian fleet entered the inland sea in the morning a heavy thunder-storm protected it from observation until it reached the city on the opposite end of the island from Cyzicus. Here Alcibiades seized all boats and vessels that no word of his arrival should be carried down to the enemy.

Fearing the Peloponnesians would take refuge behind the walls of Cyzicus if they saw the entire fleet, he divided it into three parts, ordering Thrasybulus and Theramenes to remain behind under easy sail while he with forty ships went ahead and challenged Mindarus. A body of hoplites had been sent by land to create a diversion. The rain had been succeeded by a light mist.

When Mindarus saw this insignificant fleet approaching he made a gesture of contempt and sailed out at once to annihilate it. Alcibiades feinted a retreat and the Lacedæmonian General pursued him through the haze. It was but a few moments later that the Peloponnesians found themselves surrounded by what

seemed to them a thousand ships, and were fighting for their lives. The hoarse shouting and the ringing of spears on shields lasted but a short time. The Peloponnesians wriggled out and made for the shore. They ran their ships on the beach, but were pursued too closely to escape into the city, and turned at bay as the Athenians poured out of their triremes to the land.

The battle lasted for many hours, the Peloponnesians assisted by the land force of Pharnabazus—a brave man and a fine soldier. The Athenian hoplites had attacked them in the rear.

The result as the evening sun dyed the water crimson was a complete victory for the Athenians. Mindarus was slain. Pharnabazus saved himself by flight at the last moment. The entire Peloponnesian fleet of eighty triremes was captured. The Peloponnesian garrison was put to the sword, the town spared, but forced to raise an immense contribution. The soldiers were given their promised share of the booty, but when they cheered Alcibiades it was not for that only.

The whole engagement, carefully worked out to its minutest detail, was an overwhelming triumph for him and added greatly to his renown. His name resounded throughout Hellas—and Asia.

The Peloponnesian fleet was destroyed. Several days after the battle a note written by the Lacedæmonian Governor was intercepted on its way to Sparta and was long preserved in the archives of Athens. It was truly Laconian.

"Our ships are gone. Mindarus is slain. Our men are starving. We know not what to do."

Alcibiades had no intention of resting on his laurels. He laid waste the country of Pharnabazus in the vicinity of the island, none daring to oppose him, and then sailed to Chalcedon, opposite Byzantium, on the Asiatic border of the Bosphorus.

This important city as well as its neighbour had revolted from Athens and accepted a Lacedæmonian

Governor. Before Alcibiades arrived he learned that the inhabitants had collected all their property and placed it in the hands of the Bithynians, an adjacent and friendly tribe. He led his entire army to the Bithynian frontier and sent a herald to demand the treasure. Were it yielded at once they would not be molested; otherwise they would be exterminated. The terrified Bithynians not only delivered up their trust, but entered into an alliance with Alcibiades.

He then laid siege to Chalcedon. It was of the utmost importance that Athens should be mistress both of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, for she depended upon the Euxine Sea beyond for much of her corn. She had also levied a tax on all trading ships that sailed the route between the Euxine and the Ægean, no mean revenue. He invested the city with a wall reaching from sea to sea.

Pharnabazus meanwhile had fed the survivors of the Peloponnesian troops. He came with them and his own army to the relief of Chalcedon. There was a desperate sortie from the city, but the Lacedæmonian Governor was killed, and Pharnabazus once more humiliatingly defeated and forced to retire.

After the battle Alcibiades left Theramenes to conduct the siege and sailed to the Hellespont to raise contributions. Selymbria, another of the revolted cities, was wealthy and quite able to feed the army for several months. As he never threw away lives when he could avoid it, he had managed to enter into correspondence with several of its discontented inhabitants and they had promised to open the gates on a certain night, when he could enter with an army and take the town more or less peacefully.

XVIII

Alcibiades chose the darkest nights for his enterprises. It was too cloudy even for starlight as he sailed down

the Hellespont, intending to land his troops a quarter of a mile from the city. A torch was to signal at midnight if all had gone well.

The ships were not half beached when he saw a flare from the ramparts. The Greeks had no means of telling the hour at night, and in war, for they could hardly carry water-clocks about with them; but Alcibiades, like many others, had something resembling a timepiece in his head, and it seemed to him quite an hour before midnight when the darkness was stabbed by that sharp brief flame. It did not occur to him, however, to blame anything but his own calculations, and summoning thirty hoplites and twenty light-armed infantry, with orders to the rest to follow as soon as possible, he ran at full speed to the wall facing the sea. The gates were open and they advanced rapidly toward the market-place, where the conspirators were to meet them and give further counsel.

The street was narrow and winding; it was not until he made a sudden turn that he found himself in the Agora—and confronting a large armed force! It had stood there in silence and darkness, but in a moment the square flamed with torches, and the General standing in front of the ranks called out in a voice almost as loud as that of Thrasybulus:

"Halt and surrender!"

Here was a predicament! Alcibiades did some of the most rapid thinking of his life. If he resisted he could be surrounded in a moment, his little army and himself put to death or taken prisoners. There was time to retreat, but that would mean running pell-mell back to the gates and out of the city like a lot of rabbits to their holes. Not for Alcibiades! His pride would be in the dust, his great reputation tarnished. He must use his wits.

Passing a hasty word down the line to send the last man to hurry the army to action, he raised his hand and advanced with an air of authority. The Selym-

brian General looked at him in amazement, but with even more interest, for it was the first time he had ever seen that redoubtable Athenian of whom he had heard so much. He had given the signal to advance, but he waved back his troops and all listened intently. Greeks, when not excited, were always willing to parley.

"Athenian-Selymbrians," said Alcibiades, making his voice both sonorous and sweet, "I have a great force behind me, but surely it is not meet that we of the same blood should kill one another. You revolted from Athens, your mother-city, under the false promises of the Lacedæmonians, who cannot come to your aid, for they are destroyed, as you must have heard. The Athenian fleet is in control of the Ægean, the Hellespont, and the Propontis. Lay down your arms and I promise that your city shall not be sacked."

The oligarchical General cast a glance behind him. There was murmuring in the rear. It was evident that Alcibiades' words had made an impression, and he was known to be a man of his word. But the Oligarch, who was also Governor of Selymbria, although he knew no help could come to him from the Lacedæmonians, felt secure in his walled city, and had no desire to render tribute to Athens again.

"The gates have been shut behind you," he said. "Your army cannot enter. But if you will give me your word to leave the city quietly and not return, you may go in peace. We have no desire for blood-shed——"

"My men can climb walls," interrupted Alcibiades scornfully, "and they have come prepared. I can hold you here with what force I have until they are in the city. Then, whether I and my men have been wiped out or not, I warn you there will be no mercy, for there are Thracians among them."

There were loud exclamations behind the Governor; these hastily armed citizens were little used to warfare, and the Thracians were the most savage of all foes.

"Let us agree! Let us agree!" The men were already breaking ranks. The Governor turned with a scowl, but at this moment loud cries were heard at the end of the street, the clash of many shields, swiftly running feet. The Selymbrians melted like snow fallen into a hot brazier, the Governor left alone in the square. But he too was a brave man.

"Very well," he said, "I am forced to submit, but I rely upon you to keep your word."

Alcibiades waited until his men had all entered the large market-place and formed into ranks. He then called out the Thracians and ordered them to return to the ships. They went unwillingly, for they had joined the Athenian army not only for pay, but for loot, and as the advance force had been attacked they had expected to take part in a fierce retaliation. But it was Alcibiades who had mustered them and they were attached to him personally. They grumbled but went. Alcibiades then ordered the troops to lie down where they were and wait until daylight. A fire was built and he sat beside it talking with the Governor during the remaining hours of the night.

On the following morning he was escorted in state to the members of the Council, sitting sullenly in their Chamber, received their pledge of fidelity to the Empire, and ordered them to pay a heavy tribute. They had no option and handed over the treasure. He then placed a garrison in the city and sailed away; but not before the mystery of his betrayal was solved. All the conspirators but one had been faithful, and they had learned of the traitor's defection but an hour before midnight. They had lit the torch at once, hoping that Alcibiades was prepared to rush the city with his troops. He saved their lives by making them members of the garrison.

On the following day he appeared before Perinthus, which purchased immunity with a heavy fine. He then went on to Chalcedon.

Here he found that Theramenes had entered into a covenant with Pharnabazus for the capitulation of the city. It would again become a tributary of Athens and pay all arrears. Pharnabazus himself would give twenty talents in behalf of the city and escort envoys to Susa, enabling them to "submit propositions for accommodation to the Great King." Meanwhile the Athenians should abstain from hostilities against his satrapy.

But he would not complete the ratification without the signature of Alcibiades. To him Alcibiades was the Athenian army, Athens itself. And a haughty autocratic person who might well repudiate a covenant made in his absence.

Alcibiades ratified the agreement. Chalcedon was once more a part of the Empire. But perhaps the most singular result of these peaceful proceedings was the immediate friendship that sprang up between Alcibiades and Pharnabazus. The Persian had every reason to hate this all-conquering Athenian, who had forced him to run for his life no less than three times; but he was a man of great generosity and breadth of mind. He had admired Alcibiades long before they met to confer in his tent, and he found him personally irresistible. Alcibiades was equally charmed, if only because of this fair-haired Persian's unlikeness to Tissaphernes; a man not as cultivated as that plausible scoundrel, but one with whom it was possible to deal without lying and sleepless caution. They must remain enemies for the present, but they swore eternal friendship, and Alcibiades promised to visit him when the war was over.

He next proceeded to Byzantium, and after a siege of eight months that wealthy city was starved into submission. The inhabitants were spared after an immense contribution to the needs of the army. Athens once more was mistress of the Bosphorus.

There were other revolted cities on the Propontis

to subdue, fine, and force into renewed allegiance to the Empire. He sent Thrasybulus to reconquer the island of Thasos, valuable for its wine, marble, and gold mines, attended to business of his own in the Chersonese, and set sail for Samos.

XIX

He knew Tiy was not there, but in Athens, where the Five Thousand had some time since merged into the old Demos. There had been no correspondence between them; as Alcibiades and Persia were now at swords' point she had no excuse for continuing her intercourse with him, and an intercepted letter might bring down the wrath of the Great King himself.

But there had been an occasional exchange of messages, and a year since she had sent him word of her intended return to Athens. He inferred she had obtained the consent of Tissaphernes, who, no doubt, deluded himself with the idea that he could make use of her to betray the city when the time was ripe.

Athens seemed as far off as ever. He had restored the greater part of her lost Empire, but she had made no formal sign of forgiveness. The sentence of death still hung over him, the plate of lead on which the curse was engraved still stood in the Agora. Charmides had been recalled after a year of exile, his family having proven to the satisfaction of the Demos that no profanation of the Mysteries had taken place in his house. The other exiles had been permitted to return to the city upon payment of a heavy fine, for they had been minor offenders, and Athens was in sore need of good citizens to serve the State. Their wrath had been all for him.

They had made no attempt to interfere with his activities, for they dared not anger the men with the fleet. He knew that his friends, led by Critias, were agitating for pardon, but they were opposed, as ever,

not only by his enemies and the more superstitious of the Demos, but by the Hierophant of Eleusis, and all the families whose members held office by hereditary right. One branch of his own house was among them, but the jealous hatred of the Alcmæonidæ was excelled by few of his personal enemies.

And yet the Athenians tacitly accepted his services, services no other man could render, knowing as well as he did that without him their fleet would have been at the bottom of the Hellespont long since. A cowardly compromise. Sometimes in the bitterness of his soul he hated them all, then flung them out of his mind with contempt. He had buried his sentiment for Athens and pursued his triumphant way for his own advantage. His was the greatest name of his time, he was wealthy once more, for the Generals had their share of the booty, and he could call all Thrace to his back, did he beckon.

He reached Samos in the early afternoon, a city going about its business and thankful to have been long rid of hungry soldiers. But when the word flew about that the purple pennon of Alcibiades had been sighted the people rushed down to the harbour, for they had great news for him. Each would have been the one to give it, but that was the privilege of the President of the Council, and after they had cheered for ten minutes and the ships were ready to beach, he went forward, and as Alcibiades leaped to the shore received him in his arms.

"Congratulations, most glorious of warriors," he said. "And may the gods prosper you for ever and grant you unnumbered trophies in the future as in the past."

"Thank you, Xenippus," said Alcibiades, who took this effusive welcome as a tribute to his victories. "And I am glad to see you and look upon this friendly island again——"

"Ah, but I have not told you," interrupted the beaming Samian. "You are an exile no longer. The

sentence of death has been revoked, your properties restored, and you have been elected a Strategos by the Demos in Athens. You may return when you will."

Alcibiades found himself gripping the sand with his feet to steady himself, but he smiled and said: "It is good to hear this great news first from you and the people of Samos, who have shown me such hospitality in the past." And the people cheered him again.

The President took him to his house and handed him letters from Critias, Axiochus, Callias, and other friends, confirming his reinstatement in the good graces of the Athenians, and begging him to come home at once. He must reap the fruit of his victories in a great public triumph, and use his personal power, as ever.

But he was not yet ready to go to Athens. Money was needed for that insatiable maw, the fleet; nor would he return with no chests of gold in the hold of his ships. He sent Thrasyllus with a division to herald his return, and sailed for the coast of Caria, where in due course he levied a contribution of a hundred talents.

BOOK VI

BOOK VI

I

SPRING once more. The wild flowers covered the islands with a carpet of many colours. The pines, cypresses, and olive groves, fresh-washed by the last rains, seemed to harbour all the singing birds of the world. Goat-herds were sitting among their flocks on the mountains, and the village streets swarmed with men and women—as colourful as the flowers—staring at the fleet led by the purple pennon of Alcibiades on its way to Athens.

The twenty ships in single file rounded the cape of Sunion and advanced down the bay of Phaleron, the seamen and soldiers lifting their voices in a shout that shook the triremes as they caught the first glimpse of the spear and helmet of Athenè Promachus flaming high on the Acropolis.

Alcibiades set his lips to control a wave of emotion. To return as a conquering hero to his city after eight years of exile! An experience unique in history! Even Themistocles, great as he was, and potentially valuable as he must ever have been as long as life was in him, had been treated with the basest ingratitude by the Athenians until the day of his death in the land of the Barbarian.

And he was returning with two hundred victories, great and minor, to his credit, and a large sum of money in the hold of his ship. Three years ago, could they have caught him, he would have been on his way to drink a cup of hemlock with what cynical dignity he could summon, his body to rot beside the bones of Antiphon and Archeptolemus in the Barathrum.

He set his lips again, but this time with all his old arrogant pride as he reflected that he owed this triumphant return to no capricious favour of the gods, but to his own genius, his indomitable energies and resource. Not an opportunity had slipped past him ; if one had been wanting he had made it ; if fortune had seemed reluctant he had taken her by the throat and forced compliance. His mistakes had been few, his victories many, his judgment as cold and unerring as if the fumes of wine and passion had never entered his head. Even his carelessness in putting himself in the power of Tissaphernes had been turned into a triumph, for his escape had bitterly disconcerted Persia and made him all the more powerful and popular with his men. Once more life was before him to do with as he would.

But there must always be one haunting regret. If he had sailed out in command of that armament eight years ago there would have been no lost Empire to recover, no wanton sacrifice of thousands of men, no devastated Attica. He would have conquered half the world by this time, and Athens, instead of a mere military post, with anxious sentinels on her walls day and night, would be mistress of all the seas, and of a land empire unrivalled by Persia.

And he would be Athens.

Now, he might rout Lacedæmonia once for all and bring Persia to terms, subdue Amphipolis and Chalkidike, but there was little hope of further conquest in his lifetime. The State was too depleted in men and money. She must have peace as soon as might be, and then conserve what she had. Some future Alcibiades—fifty—a hundred—years hence might give Athens the Empire of his dreams. But not he.

Time, the shattering disillusions and dangers that had followed upon nearly thirty-five years of radiant good fortune, and these last three of sleepless responsibility, perils, and hardship, had tempered his ambitions. At all events they were no longer inordinate ; he was

too practical to indulge in wild dreams of what no longer was in his power to accomplish. His common sense rarely failed him. Not even on that night at Phaleron, in that closed villa he had just passed, when he had confided his dreams to Tiy—no, not dreams, his intentions of conquering the world and making himself Tyrant or King. If all had gone as he planned those intentions would have been realized ere this. He had had the will and the genius, and with the wealth piling up in the coffers of Athens, the treasure of all Sicily at his disposal, he would have sped on to Carthage, and returned to conquer Lacedæmonia at a blow. The rest of Hellas would have crumbled before him, and then for the East!

But he dismissed these futile regrets with a shrug. It was not to be and that was that. It was no small achievement to have swept the Lacedæmonian and allied fleets from the seas, humiliated Persia, reconquered all the revolted cities east of Chalkidike and conquered others, restored the prestige to Athens in the Ægean. If he were not returning as a world-conqueror he was still Alcibiades. The most famous man of his time; a fame no man living could rival and few dead.

His thoughts swung to Tiy. Not a line had he received from her, and with no fleet in the Ægean but his own she could have written to Samos without apprehension. Three years were a long time! Perhaps she had grown weary—after ten of devotion—or whatever had been the motive that animated that strange woman. For ten years—save only that one when she had deserted him—she had been constantly in his life, constantly at work on his behalf; that mind, as quick, sinuous, and resourceful as his own, ever on the alert to advance his interests or countervail the plotting of his enemies. She had saved his life once and would have saved it a hundred times if necessary.

Ten years. Surely she could have been faithful for three more. He knew the effect of long absence on

women as on men. There had been accomplished men in Samos. There were still many men in Athens, for although most of them had been out with the fleet at one time or another, some had been invalided home, or recalled to give the benefit of their years and experience to the State as members of the Council. Young men were always growing up.

She was now thirty-four, an age when a woman might well have grown weary of waiting for one man and hastened to find love before it was too late.

And himself? Did he still love her? He remembered that night under the stars as he sailed for the north. But after that life had been very crowded. He was a soldier, a General with terrific responsibilities, a grim determination to succeed and conquer. There had been no room in his mind, nor time, to think of a woman whom he might not see for years, nor live to see again.

Even when in winter quarters, or during a long siege, there had been much to occupy his mind. He had built himself a castle at Byzanthé on the Hellespont, and given what time he could to cultivating the Thracian tribes in the neighbourhood. He never lost sight of the possibility that this fortification might one day be his only refuge, and he had seen to its furnishing and hidden much money in one of the inner walls. He was once more a wealthy man, but even had he known of the amiable spirit of Athens he would not have brought all of his treasure with him. Never would he trust the Athenians too far again.

Action. Action. Action. After all, there had been little time for his own affairs during these last three years. Nights of revel to enliven a soldier's strenuous life, forgotten on the morrow. And when a man lives a life of constant action, combined with thinking, watching, planning, pondering on old tactics and inventing new ones, snatching what pleasure he might, he grows older every day, harder, more practical—no

inclination to moon over the future and one woman. He had forgotten Tiy for months at a time.

But it seemed to him, now that he was drawing closer to her every moment, could almost feel her presence, see her in that familiar house, that she had always glimmered like a star somewhere in the depths of his mind. Transient flitting women had not dimmed it, moths of a night. A strange heroic figure, perhaps unattainable ever. Perhaps, too, as she had once told him ironically, that was the secret of her fascination for him. Thirteen years she had eluded him. She might love him—or have loved him; but she still demanded an inexplicable something he had not given her—were that it.

And then he felt suddenly angry and dismissed her.

II

His ship was pointing for the twin moles that artificially narrowed and guarded the entrance to the harbour of Piræus. He saw that the hills were alive with men, and cheers came over the water. He lifted his spear.

There was no wind and it took nearly an hour to row from the harbour gates to the shipsteads. The scene, he reflected grimly, was very similar to that of his departure for Syracuse. Every roof was crowded and every inch of the hills and shore. But when he had gone out that day many names had been shouted: Nicias, Lamachus, the names of the more popular of the commanders of triremes, as well as his own. To day "Alcibiades" alone rang over the water. But to his ears those voices had a tired hollow sound. Hardly to be wondered at, glad as they might be to see him, and grateful for his services. They had suffered much and must be weary and sad.

He passed the house of Callias and looked up.

Men and women were moving about excitedly, clapping their hands, waving fans, parasols, walking-sticks, handkerchiefs, girdles. Tiy was not there.

But he had resolved to leave her to the future, and gave way to a sensation of pride. Not only in this great reception from his old—and forgiving !—fellow-citizens ; the harbour was crowded with trading-ships from the Euxine, the Propontis, Chersonese. Tithes had been paid, and Athens was plentifully supplied with corn and grain ; to him and none other she owed that boon. If his bones were bleaching in the Barathrum she would be starving to-day.

How Agis must be raging at Decelea !

As his trireme approached the beach a sudden silence fell ; and the effect after the tumult of the last hour was disconcerting, almost sinister. He had a moment of apprehension, in no wise decreased by the trembling voice of Polytion, who had been with the fleet for the past six months.

"I fear," muttered the man, than whom there was none braver on the battlefield, "I fear, Alcibiades—what if all this demonstration be but a snare ? They may have enticed you here—or your enemies may be ready to stab you as you land——"

Alcibiades shook off his momentary doubt. "Nonsense !" he said angrily. "I see Critias. Cleinias. Charmides. Half a hundred of my clan and friends. And Young Pericles . . . Axiochus—your croaking reminds me of him. Pull yourself together."

That silence might be ominous or merely emotional. Whatever it was, he had been in tight places too often to discover fear in his composition at this late day. Let come what would. As the ship beached he sprang alone to the shore, smiling gaily.

He was instantly surrounded by his relatives and friends, and he saw at once they were forming a body-guard, although the cheering had burst forth with redoubled enthusiasm, and many others were shouting

his name and striving to reach him. A garland was flung over his helmet.

These old friends that surrounded him were clapping him on the back, and if their eyes were watchful, their lips smiled the warmest of welcomes. Young Pericles and Axiochus each threw an arm around his neck and Cleinias pounded him excitedly between the shoulder-blades. His chin rested on the top of Agathon's head. They all pressed about him so closely he could hardly move his legs.

"What is the matter?" he asked as the deputation of Piræan magistrates that had come to greet him in state forced a passage through the crowd. "They all seem friendly enough, and surely my recall was official."

"Nothing is the matter that we know of," said Critias. "But we thought it best to be on the lookout for swift daggers. All your enemies are not dead, like Androcles, and they resent your pardon as bitterly as they resent your trophies. Corrupt and vicious demagogues like Cleophon are furious at your recall. It would please them to dispose of you before you could exert your old magic in the Ecclesia—which is called for an hour hence——"

"For that reason," interrupted Axiochus eagerly, "I forbade young Alcibiades to come down here to-day. He would have been another to guard, and did anything happen he is too young to witness it."

Alcibiades laughed. "What a lot of old croakers you are! However, with this bodyguard I am safe enough, and I know how to use my own dagger. How do we go to Athens—by horse, chariot, or on our legs? I am willing to stretch mine."

"We go by horse—through the valley. The Long Walls are already crowded, for men are hastening to the Pnyx."

Alcibiades glanced about him. The wide street was packed with cheering, staring people, pushed back

against the walls, as far as might be by a troop of Knights in their scarlet capes, who had met him as he left the wharves and entered the city proper. They also would escort him to Athens and to the Pnyx. Before him lay the Agora, named after Hipponicus, who had built this stately white city and whose son now lay in the criminals' pit. Life !

In the Agora he and his friends mounted the horses awaiting them and were soon galloping up the valley to Athens. He had left his spear in the ship, but as the dazzling glory of the Acropolis burst full upon him he raised his hand in salutation.

III

Alcibiades would not hear of going to the Pnyx until he had had a bath and fresh raiment. He had been on shipboard with scarcely a day's interval since he had left Samos, and he longed not only for hot water but for the old familiar ministrations of Saon, who knew his habits and would have everything prepared for him.

The Knights would await him in the street, but his friends hastened to the Pnyx to secure seats close to the Bema, and he entered his house alone.

He had the sensation of entering a tomb. His spirits dropped to zero, and he wished he had postponed his first visit until after a night with his friends.

The aula looked dingy and forlorn. The peacocks on the walls were faded and splashed with rain. The beautiful marble statues and benches were stained and weather-beaten. The palms skeletons. The cloth of gold on the altar had been eaten by rats. Pan was covered with rust and the tiny stream of water trickling from his mouth gave him the appearance of a drooling old man.

He had been prepared in a measure for changes, for Axiochus had told him that the keys had not been given

to Saon until yesterday, but this was far worse than anything he had imagined. Here was no longer the most beautiful aula in Athens !

Worse depredations in the pastas. Moth holes everywhere. Generations of rats must have lived on the cushions and lower parts of his priceless tapestries. He wondered at their powers of digestion. Dust was inches deep.

He entered the thalamos. Saon had been at work here. It was swept and dusted, the old cushions replaced ; he had evidently taken time to run to the bazaars. Alcibiades heard him moving about in the bathroom.

He stood staring for a moment out into the court . . . half-expecting to see Hippareté sitting by the altar. She was less than a memory, and the gods knew he never wanted to see her again, but in that moment he would have been grateful to look upon, if only for a second, all things as they were in his careless happy youth. He was only forty-three, and no athlete living was stronger and more agile, but he felt suddenly old. His life had been too crowded ; he had lived too hard. He doubted if he were capable of a new sensation. Sensation itself was blunted after all these years of hard and reckless living, disappointments, plotting, hating, vengeance, and then three of unbroken triumph, which had come to seem all in the day's work and no longer provided a thrill.

To be as he was when he had sauntered indifferently through this door to pay a perfunctory morning visit to a woman whose face he had forgotten !

He wished he had not returned to Athens. The whole morning had been a disappointment. There had been something unreal about that cheering crowd, a mere ghost of other great receptions accorded him in the past. A lack of spontaneity . . . well, like himself, they were eight years older, and those years had been enough to drain the enthusiasm out of Athenians.

Even his friends, although their welcome had been exuberant, were changed. There had been something forced, an overheartiness ; a task to perform and doing it as well as they knew how.

Critias looked even more than eight years older. The cruel lines about his mouth had deepened. A sinister face. He had convinced the Demos after the fall of the Four Hundred that he had had no part in those secret assassinations, but Alcibiades doubted. Critias, while too calculating to permit himself the luxury of jealousy, had many private hatreds, and some of the objects of that hatred had been among the slain.

He had always known there was no affection even for him in that mind as hard and polished as a jewel ; his apparent devotion had been inspired by self-interest only. If he had wanted him back it was no doubt to serve some purpose of his own.

Axiochus had grown fat. Agathon looked like a wrinkled baby. He had caught a glimpse of Aristophanes in the crowd. Bald to his neck. Charmides, who had been the beauty of Athens in his youth, and a handsome man for long after, looked faded and careworn. Callias had remained on his roof ; he always avoided crowds ; but no doubt the years had taken their toll of him as well.

Never in his life had he wanted anything as much as to see Athens again. He wished he could mount his horse and ride back to his ship. The life of a soldier was the only life left for him. Let the enemy build their new navy as quickly as might be and give battle in the Ægean.

He turned with a shrug. Well, Saon would not have changed much in three years ; nor have suffered hardships in the house of Tiy.

Tiy !

The man entered the room and gave a loud exclamation of joy.

"Master! Master!" And he flung himself at Alcibiades' feet and kissed his knee.

His master touched him lightly on the shoulder. "There is nothing wanting in this welcome, at least," he said, smiling. "Now get up and look at me."

Saon rose and devoured him with his eyes. "You have not had me to take care of you," he said, lapsing into the familiarity of the favourite slave, "but you look well and strong."

"How much older do I look?"

"Older? Yes, a little." Saon regarded him critically, his head on one side. "You have no grey in your hair—although it needs cutting badly. No wrinkles, nor an ounce more of flesh. Your skin is very bronzed, but that is as it should be for you must have been seldom indoors. But somehow—well, you have lived a hard life, Master. One cannot fight constantly for years and erect many trophies and look like a young god with not a care in the world. You are as beautiful as ever but in another way. More handsome than beautiful, perhaps. And the long absence from luxury must have something to do with it. There was no Miletus or Samos in the north."

Alcibiades laughed. "I have almost forgotten how to define the word luxury. There is little left of it in this house. Well, I am glad to hear, dear Saon, that I do not look as old as I feel. Let us to the bath. And you may clip my hair. I should be on that cursed Pnyx at this moment—let them bite their finger-nails for another hour. They have kept me waiting for eight years."

IV

CRITIAS employed the time well during that hour. He was a harsh speaker, with a contempt for all the graces of rhetoric, and with none of the natural eloquence of

Alcibiades. But he was a clear thinker, his brilliant versatile mind had been trained by Socrates and Protagoras, and his orations were always listened to with keen interest. He never spoke unless he had some point to gain, and rarely left the Bema without having had his way with the Ecclesia.

He made a scathing denunciation of those Hermokopids who had sought to ruin Alcibiades and succeeded only too well for the time being. Succeeded because the Athenians, forgetting the inestimable services of that devoted son of Athens and all their love for him, had been willing to believe his enemies instead of himself. They had even denied him an immediate trial, the greatest wrong ever done any man, believing that silly story of the Mysteries, and nearly wrecked his life and themselves. No Athenian had ever been so greatly endowed as Alcibiades. No man had ever poured out his wealth in the service of the State as he had done. No patriot had ever been animated by loftier motives. And the Athenians had permitted a horde of worthless men—whose only chance of success lay in expelling better men than themselves—to ruin him ! But by his own transcendent genius and tireless energy he had recaptured fortune and shared it with the countrymen who had driven him into exile and the camp of the enemy—whence he had escaped as soon as he found it within his power to serve Athens again. He could have destroyed her but he had saved her. He had in the last three years erected more trophies than Themistocles and Pericles together, and had come home during his brief interval in the war, after he had driven the Peloponnesians from the Ægean, and before they could recuperate their losses in ships and men—to see his beloved Athens once more, and give his fellow-citizens his personal assurance of his lifelong devotion to her cause.

The Athenians, well-chastened, were in a proper frame of mind to listen to Alcibiades when he arrived

on the Pnyx, surrounded by Scythian archers, and mounted the Bema.

It was several moments before he could speak, for the cheering was prolonged even beyond their habit when a favourite stood on that historic platform. His keen ears detected nothing forced nor hollow in those cheers, whatever they may have been earlier. His eyes roved over the Ecclesia, scanning faces individually and in mass—six thousand of them at least! The Oligarchs as of old were seated at the extreme right. The irreconcilables, with their scowling leader Cleophon, on the left, far back. The mass between was the old Demos, and their faces were alight with affection, enthusiasm, joy, hope, and an almost pathetic yearning.

Could it be possible they still loved him? Him, who had sent Gylippus to Syracuse, Agis to Attica, as bare as a bone beyond the walls; wrested Chios, Miletus, from them; inspired the conspiracy of the Four Hundred? All this might have been resolutely dismissed after the magnificent services he had rendered during these three years past—but that they should still love him! Send for him, not as a mere reward for his achievements, but because they wanted him back, to look at him, to have him among them again! In those upturned faces he could read nothing less.

That dark discoloured heart melted. A wave of emotion, the most poignant of his life, rose and engulfed his arrogant reserve. The tears ran down his face. He wept unashamed.

It was the last thing needed. Had it been a masterstroke of drama, calculated to rouse the deepest sentiments of that responsive people educated in emotions by the great tragic poets, it could not have produced a more soul-stirring effect. Only the police prevented them from rushing forward and embracing him. Many too broke down and wept. Axiochus blew his nose violently. The Oligarchs and the Cleophonites

left the Pnyx. Their book was closed for the present.

Alcibiades hardly remembered afterward what he said in that speech. He vehemently denied the charge of violating the Mysteries—there was nothing else to be done; indeed, if he had admitted the offence it would have been the most cruel act of his life—and deplored their lack of faith in him and their readiness to listen to his enemies. But he did not reproach them; he only begged them to forgive him all his sins, and remember his services; services which should be even greater and more far-reaching in the future. The Lacedæmonians and their allies were preparing another fleet, and there was yet much to do before their final surrender. But every fleet they sent out should be swept from the sea; if his life were spared by the gods he pledged himself to accomplish that result, and restore Athens to her former glory and power.

He spoke for twenty minutes only, and the enthusiasm of the Athenians waxed steadily. When he finished a vote was taken by the raising of hands, and he was elected commander-in-chief of all the forces on land and sea. He was awarded a gold crown of laurel leaves. The Eumolpidæ—the hereditary officers of Eleusis—were directed to revoke the curse they had pronounced, and the plate of lead on which it was engraved should be carried down to Phaleron that day and thrown into the sea.

All these measures were voted upon amidst the wildest rejoicing as he stood with folded arms beside the Bema. Once he lifted his eyes to the neighbouring hill. There was a curtain across the window.

But there was no time during that day or night for any woman. His house was full until dusk, and as the sun set in all the red glory of a Greek sunset behind Ægina, he went to a great public banquet in the Hall of the Prytanies. It lasted far into the night. His first thought next morning was for boiled cabbage.

V

ATHENS was not the pest-hole it had been during former invasions. She was determined to offer no breeding-ground to the plague again, and the inhabitants of the farms and little towns had been sent to Salamis, Ægina, and other adjacent islands. They provided their own shelter, but Athens shared her provisions with them, whether meagre or abundant.

The city was comparatively clean. The dicasts went daily about their business, and men gathered in the Agora to talk, or listen to Socrates, forgetting, so seasoned were they, the enemy beyond the walls. They slept profoundly at night, no longer disturbed by the sentries on the ramparts passing the word from beat to beat. Young couples married ceremonially. New citizens were born. The dead were burned close to the Dipylon Gate, the urn taken out to the Sacred Way in the darkness of night.

Priests grumbled at the lack of animals for sacrifice, for Eubœa had gone over to the enemy three years since, but slaves in the early morning gossiped in the spring-houses as of old, and vociferous bargains were driven by fish-mongers in the market-place. Agis had tried once or twice to storm the gates of the city, but had been driven back by the cavalry, and armed hoplites on the walls.

The city smiled upon Alcibiades. He had no cause for complaint. It had received him with open arms, and would never have let him go again had peace been restored. All their hope lay in him. The very considerable services of the other Generals were ignored; they were not re-elected, for Alcibiades was to appoint his own Generals—Generals of hoplites only. He reappointed Thrasybulus, who was still before Thasos, but postponed his other decisions until later. He detected hatred under Theramenes' smooth demeanour, but Thrasyllus was too attached to him for resentment.

He was the idol of Athens once more, her First Citizen, the Head of the State. So had he been at thirty, and so was he again at forty-three. A lifetime between ! Zeus knew he was twice thirteen years older, and they must know now by instinct their confidence was not misplaced. The wildness was gone out of him, and although he might revel with his friends at night, he felt no impulse to riot through the streets nor play pranks on dignified citizens.

Nor could his friends do enough. They sent their slaves to his house, Agathon his Elean cook. His invitations to banquets were so numerous he had left it to Saon to remind him of his engagements. The painter Agatharcus of his own will came and restored the peacocks and other wall paintings, and his house was quickly refurnished.

But he had private causes for dissatisfaction. He almost disliked his son. The boy, now sixteen, had come to see him on the afternoon of his arrival, accompanied by a nephew of Critias named Aristocles, but called Plato on account of his broad forehead. Young Alcibiades was feminine and affected. He had cultivated the lisp he himself strove to be rid of. The other little fellow was sturdy and manly, with a magnificent brow ; the specimen he had given to the State, although pretty enough, was far from shining by contrast.

" If the war were over," he said to Axiochus, " I'd send him to Sparta. He needs harsh discipline to make a man of him. You have pampered him until he is little better than a girl."

" It is Sostrata's fault. He was delicate for a time. But he does well in the palæstra and will be a fine man yet."

Alcibiades shrugged. " I doubt it. He should be Cleinias' son, not mine. We are a vigorous race, and the descendants of heroes sung by Homer. Why should these effeminate creatures appear among us every now and again ? "

Axiochus gave it up. He was no student of heredity. But Alcibiades recalled something Tiy had said to him one day—what was it ? The feminine inheritance in men's states, the masculine in those of women. Some secret disturbance of balance. Some arrest of development on normal lines. He too gave it up. And the philosophers knew as little as he.

He was far more interested in Tiy herself ! Three days and not a word from that woman—save a formal invitation to a dinner two nights hence. He had not been to call on her. Not only did he stand on his dignity but he was deeply hurt. True, he was a man and she a woman, but if she were but half a woman she would have beckoned. And if the friend she had always pretended to be, she would have manifested her friendship as others had done. She was playing some deep game, that woman. She was a natural intriguer, and had enjoyed all that lying and plotting and circumventing, in spite of her vaunted love of truth.

Or had she merely grown indifferent and was delicately handing him his cue ?

But she had loved him once. Never otherwise would she have gone with him into exile and lived in that damnable Sparta. No chance for intrigue there ; and living on Saon's cooking in a hovel. He had not the least idea whether women were more faithful than men ; he had never given one a chance to enlighten him on that point. Certainly he was the most inconstant of men where women were concerned, and Tiy in some ways was as much of a man as himself.

She has always puzzled him, and she puzzled him now more than ever. If that was her object, he thought angrily, she had accomplished it, for he found it impossible to dismiss her from his mind. . . . But why ? Why ? He had told her that he loved her, asked her to marry him. True, that was three years ago, and she might reasonably assume he had changed

his mind or forgotten her in the turmoil of those years. She was a proud woman and, were this the explanation, had no wish to place herself in a humiliating position.

If that were true . . . if she had not grown indifferent . . . had not found some one else (and of this there was no whisper) . . . was not playing some subtle Persian game—or some game natural enough to the sex whose arts and weakness she despised when she came out of Egypt . . . well then . . .

He began to think of her tenderly.

And then ardently.

The most beautiful woman, in her singular way, he had ever seen; and the most enravishing, now that she had emerged from that hard masculine shell in which a ridiculous abnormal civilization had shut her up like the juice of a pomegranate within a dense bitter rind, and become—not a mere woman—never that—but feminine enough to combine all the seductions of her sex with the mental virility of the men he sought in companionship. And something more—what was it? . . . Something he quickened to within her that was for him alone . . . that he had missed in his life . . . wanted. . . .

A tantalizing, unattainable, unfathomable creature, whom he would probably never understand did he live with her for the rest of his life. He might resent this in time, or his infatuation deepen. Far be it from him to know how he would feel a year hence. But win her he must, and if he had to begin all over again, so be it.

VI

He wore his uniform in public, for he thought it wise to look as little like an ordinary citizen as possible. His chests full of chitons and himatia had been disposed of by moths, but the ever-resourceful Saon had provided others for the banquet.

On the night of Tiy's dinner he made as much fuss over his selection as in the old days, much to the delight of Saon, who had found him too indifferent, almost melancholy, when alone in the house.

"I am still too dark to wear white," he said, frowning at himself in the mirror. "And I would wear it, as it is more ceremonial."

"You have lost some of the bronze, Master, in these five days, but why not wear the purple?"

"I'd look as black as a Persian. And that blue is no better. Brown! Why did you buy me a brown? It is the colour for old men."

"It is golden-brown, and goes well with your hair. You used to be fond of it."

"Well, I am not going to wear it to-night. Nor the green. Not for a month yet."

He decided perforce upon the white; by no means unbecoming, Saon assured him, to the light bronze of his face, arms, and hair. The mirror added its affirmance, and his dark-blue eyes were sparkling, his curls shone like metal. He looked not a day over thirty-four and could have posed for Apollo. He shrugged and sighed as he turned from the mirror.

"I thought I had no vànity left," he said whimsically. "And I forgot to put a mirror in my house in Thrace. I hadn't seen one since I left Samos—save in Sardis, to be sure! I was more interested in ridding my clothes of vermin. But to-night—well, to-night I am Alcibiades only, and may Pluto fly away with the soldier."

He took care to be the last to arrive. The Nubian, as hideous as ever, stood at the door, and grinned a respectful welcome. Another slave was on duty in the aula, but he was relieved to see no cats on the prowl. A third slave opened the door of the andron, and his eyes were caressed by golden tissue shining on the walls, ribbons of every hue on the pillars. Delicate perfume assailed his nostrils.

For a moment he did not see Tiy. The men were all there. Agathon was standing on a chair spouting poetry, and no doubt in front of her. Then she moved, and he was enabled to look at her for a full minute before she saw him.

He had experienced qualms in approaching this house and his heart had beaten irregularly. But now it turned over.

Tiy wore a dress of some black elastic material embroidered with gold hieroglyphics, so closely fitting it seemed but an extra cuticle. Her small breasts were exposed but almost covered by a deep collar of heavy gold links set with scarabs. On her head was a sloping golden casque surmounted by twin cobra, their heads thrust viciously forward. Her face was like ivory set with jewels, as immobile as any god in its temple.

Tiy, daughter of the Pharaohs from the woman's state of Egypt, and more man than woman.

He was filled with sudden fury. His first impulse was to turn and walk out. If she were telling him with this ridiculous get-up that the thirteen years since that night had been erased from the calendar, either because she wished to put him in his place at once, or out of some infernal woman's coquetry, let her go to Hades and stay there.

But he would afford her no petty triumph. He walked forward with all the arrogance of his being and stood before her.

"Greetings, O daughter of Setepeura," he said pleasantly. "That costume becomes you more than any, and reminds me of the night we met—the night I remember most vividly after all these years. I am glad to see it has not suffered from moths."

She did not smile nor offer her hand. "Welcome, Alcibiades son of Cleinias," she replied in her deepest voice. "And congratulations on your many trophies and your reception by your fellow-citizens. A just reward. You will sit beside me."

There were no couches in the room. The men, wondering as much as Alcibiades, for she had treated them with no ceremony since her return a year since, disposed themselves in the arm-chairs, and the tables were brought in. The caprice of woman was no doubt the explanation, and they felt none of their old awe of her. The viands and wine were sure to give them a profound satisfaction. During the leanest months they had counted on the best of fare in this house.

Tiy had never observed the habit of comparative silence during the feast. But she sat like an ivory statue until Alcibiades made his first remark. Studying her out of the corner of his eye, he noted there was alkinet on her lips, and that her contours were less rounded. Her skin was as flawless as ever, but the fine sweep of jaw was almost sharp beneath it.

And those long, sinuous flexible lips had been the reddest he had ever seen. Her health was still superb; one had only to look at the brilliance of her eyes and easy upright carriage. Mistress of herself though she was, had she feared a sudden paling of her lips might betray her and taken stubborn precaution?

What in the name of Pluto and Hades was the matter with her? If they were alone he would beat her. Possess her by violence. It was what she needed, and did the opportunity occur, he'd do it.

The thought exhilarated him.

He finished his bird and said solicitously: "You are not eating, O Tiy. Are you not well?"

She turned her head and regarded him politely. "I am quite well, thank you, but I eat little in hot weather." (Something he knew quite as well as she.)

"Ah? But the weather is not too hot yet. You have spent many summers in Athens, have you not? It is too early for the seashore. Did you not have a villa at Phaleron?"

"Yes; I have it still." She turned away her head and he saw a spot of colour on a high cheek bone.

"Do you go often to Egypt?" he asked with the air of making conversation. "It is a short and pleasant journey when there are no enemy fleets at large."

"I have not been in Egypt for several years."

"You intend to live in Athens permanently then? A compliment to our city, and one, I am sure, that is highly appreciated. The more so as it is not the gay and brilliant city it was when you first honoured us . . . How many years ago was that—nine—eleven?"

"Thirteen."

"Is it possible! But a soldier keeps little count of time. I last saw you in Samos, was it not? An infinitely preferable city to Athens, just now, I should think. I wonder you have never thought of living in Susa. That is a great and splendid court and you would shine there, for of course you would have the liberties of an Egyptian woman, be treated as a man, which is as it should be. Have you never considered it?"

"Yes, I have considered it. I have received invitations. I have also given some thought to the new court of Cyrus, second son of the Great King, who has been appointed Satrap of Lydia, Cappadocia, and Phrygia the Greater. Tissaphernes is now Satrap of Caria—no more."

"Ah?" Alcibiades pricked up his ears. "What does that portend?"

"Sympathy for Lacedæmonia, so I am told. And a disposition to aid with much money instead of promises."

"And the Phœnician fleet, I suppose."

"I know nothing of the Phœnician fleet. And I am merely repeating gossip I received in a letter. I thought it might interest you as commander-in-chief."

"It does! But I dislike talking to a woman's profile, classic as it may be. Perhaps, however, that is your habit. It is long since I have had the pleasure

of sitting beside you at the banquet. And war has dimmed my memory of many things. But not," he added gallantly, "of your beauty. I am glad to find it unchanged."

She slid her long eyes around at him. "You are paying me vain compliments," she said coldly. "I feel great changes within me, and they must show somewhat in my face."

His heart beat thickly, but he answered evenly. "Life changes all of us," and he turned to speak to Critias who sat on his right.

The banquet lacked gaiety, even after the garlands and wine had been brought in. The men had begun to feel a subtle depression in the atmosphere. Tiy was never talkative, but always gracious. To-night she was not only silent, but rigid.

There was only one drinking song. Agathon recited from his last triumph in the Dionysia. Charmides from Euripides' *Orestes*. Polytion, who was a famous mimic, gave an amusing impersonation of Socrates seizing men in the Agora and firing off endless questions. Politics were discussed. The disconcerted Oligarchs and extreme left wing of the Demos, who dared not attack Alcibiades openly, but were no doubt intriguing in private.

But the evening was not a success, and they rose earlier than usual. Alcibiades formed a sudden resolution. He bade his hostess a ceremonious good-night, and went with his companions as far as the house entrance. "Wait for me here," he said. "I have forgotten something." And he walked back quickly to the andron.

VII

Tiy was standing where he had left her. He knew that she had recognized his step and would have had time to compose her features, had they relaxed.

He shut the door behind him.

"Now," he said harshly, "I want an explanation. Don't imagine I am to be put off. I'll stay all night if necessary, and if you dare summon your slaves there will be a rough-and-tumble fight in the aula, for my friends are there. If you imagine I will submit to your caprices, you don't know Alcibiades. And no one has ever had a chance to know him better! Nor will I submit to being treated like any fool whose devotion may have wearied you. You were as much to me in the past as a woman can be to a man wh s neither his wife nor his mistress. You loved me, and you are not the woman to give her love lightly, nor withdraw it. Now, what is the matter?"

He fancied that ivory skin faded as she turned her head away.

"You assume that I loved you," she said coldly. "I never told you so."

"Then why did you work for me? Go into exile with me? Risk your life for me, not once, but many times? Don't dare tell me again that the game amused you. Only love would make a dangerous game like that amusing for ten years. And what fault have you to find with me? I asked you to marry me in Sparta. In Samos. If I didn't write while I was away it was for your own safety. If I did not run to your house the moment I arrived in Athens—you well know that was impossible. Nor did you send me a word of greeting——"

She turned upon him suddenly. "It was none of those. Perhaps I did love you. But of what use? You are always off fighting. Always will be. You think of nothing else. I made up my mind it would be well to forget you——"

"It is plain you do not come of a warrior race," he interrupted bitterly. "You would know if you did that when a man's country is at war he must do what he can. Do you think I am not sick of that rough

life, of vermin, blood and the smell of blood, horrors, men hacked to pieces, the wails of starving women and children behind the walls of a beleaguered city? Do you imagine for a moment I would not rather be living the old pleasant and luxurious life here in Athens? And with you! The wives of this city may be uneducated and unfit for companionship, but they understand a man better than you with all your brains. You are not enough of a woman yet——"

"No! And I do not wish to be the sort of woman who is content to wait on a man's leisure!" He heard passion in her voice for the first time in all the years he had own her. "To be the wife of a man who forgets her for years and takes other women as he finds them. If I cannot have the best I will have nothing. Three years! I do not believe you thought of me as many times."

"I could lie to you and swear I thought of you always——"

"And I'd not believe you."

"For that reason I do not say it. I was very busy—as you may have heard! But you were always in the back of my mind. I never had any thought of not returning to you."

They were glaring at each other. He burst out furiously: "The trouble with you is that you cannot forget you come of a cursed woman's state, where you have things all your own way. You came near to forgetting it once or twice in the past, but absence has been my enemy, and you are more unreasonable than any wife in Athens who doesn't know her letters. But you are female in your depths and you love me. You know perfectly well I cannot promise you to resign the command and live a life of love here in Athens, when my country is fighting for its life——"

"I never dreamed of asking such a thing. I have no wish to despise you. But this war may last for years. I prefer to forget while I can. You may now

spend several months in Athens. Did I live with you during that time—oh, I know the lamentable weakness of women! Those years would be insupportable!" She threw her head back, the colour staining her face, her eyes blazing. "I'll not have it! Everything in me rebels. I can harden myself now—I have hardened myself. I have forbidden myself to think of you. You no longer need me. You are more powerful than ever before. They tell me the Athenians would give you a crown of another sort if you demanded it. I should be less than a cipher in your life. Your friends are swarming about you. What time have you to think of love—the kind of love I would have? What should I be? The toy of an idle night! No! I'll have none of it. I know you too well. I may be unreasonable—I curse the hour I came to Athens and discovered I was a woman—like any fool who had been born in a state where women live for the favours of men. If I do not go back it is because I cannot stand that life among women and painted men. You have spoiled both Egypt and Athens for me. But I have many diversions here, and if the seas are ever clear I shall travel again. But be a wife—your wife—I will not!"

"I knew it! You fear to love me more than you love yourself! Your infernal pride again. And you have never looked so beautiful!"

He made a swift movement toward her, but he had not noticed that she had moved backward until she stood beside a door leading to the inner quarters. It shut in his face and he heard the key turn in the lock.

VIII

More than once during the four months that followed he wondered if she had not been right in her passionate assumption that he would have little time for love

during this brief visit to Athens. He had anticipated an interval of leisure, but he had never been busier in the north. The Ecclesia had granted him full powers to do as he would. He brought the fleet up to a hundred triremes and gave orders the building should go on without cessation as long as the war lasted. The hundred talents he had levied from Caria, even after paying his men, would go far, and he promised more from similar sources.

His aula, like his office, was crowded from morning till night. Nothing was done without his approval. Archons, the Council, even the magistrates of Piræus, came daily. Ecclesias were convoked on any pretext, that he might speak to the people, who would not only look at him and hear his voice, but receive his assurances that the new Lacedæmonian-allied fleet to be sent out under the Spartan Lysander should go the way of the others.

It was the custom in time of war to bury with a great public ceremony the bones of the dead brought home to Athens. The Funeral Speech was the duty of the most prominent citizen, a duty that would devolve this year upon Alcibiades, were he in the city during the autumn. The citizens determined the ceremony should take place in the summer, as he might be gone at the date indicated by the calendar.

He had no time and less inclination to compose funeral speeches, and he asked Aspasia to write one for him. She had written many, for temporary First Citizens were always appealing to her, who had both leisure and an elevated literary style. The Citizens were as critical of these funeral speeches as of any drama in the Theatre of Dionysus. She had forgiven Alcibiades all his sins and readily consented. The oration was both solemn and beautiful, and he delivered it with great effect, standing on one of the hills among the tombs beside the Sacred Way. Thousands stood before him weeping silently or looking up to his

grave and beautiful face with awe and reverent admiration. The sentries kept their eyes on the north, and all the hoplites in the army were on guard.

When it was over the mourners followed him back to the Agora and bade him tell them further of the battle scenes that had encompassed the last moments of their dead. This was a task more congenial to him than delivering funeral speeches, and he mounted a pedestal and gave them a series of brief dramatic pictures, not forgetting that night in Selymbria, when only his wits saved him and his companions from death; nor a humorous account of his escape from Sardis. The ceremonial, accompanied as it was by the wailing of women, had saddened them, reviving all the poignancy of their first grief, but they forgot it for the moment in their love of anything savouring of drama, and cheered and applauded this unexpected talent in their hero.

These people were wax in his hands. They were willing to give him anything he asked. Subtle murmurs in his ear assured him he could make himself despot if he chose. He laughed bitterly when he thought of it. Despot of a besieged military post! His old dreams! Zeus on Olympus!

Even if he swept the enemy from the sea once for all and Agis out of Attica, what would it profit him to be Tyrant of a ruined country and a handful of men? There would be no more wars of conquest; it was doubtful if there would be enough troops left to besiege Amphipolis. Even the allies and subject states were well-nigh impoverished. The Empire was a ghost. Time, and the cessation of war for a reasonable number of years, might restore wealth to the islands, to cities like Chalcedon and Byzantium; there were growing boys in Athens. But he was too practical to look beyond the job on hand. That job was to conquer the next Peloponnesian fleet; and the next, if their powers of recuperation held out.

Moreover, it was one thing to become a Tyrant

and another to remain one. It was an office dependent upon the will of the people, and to hold it a man must remain on the spot and keep his subjects under his direct personal influence. He well knew that the moment he left Athens his enemies would emerge from their holes and begin their machinations. And none understood better than he the fickleness of the Athenians.

He longed to talk over these matters with Tiy—when in the past had he ever done anything without consulting her? After he left her that night, baffled and furious, he had vowed never to think of her again. Never had he hated any man as he hated that woman. But the hot tide in his brain receded in time, and he was always reasonable when he had emerged from an attack of passionate temper. He knew her too well not to understand her, and in a measure he sympathized with her; not wholly, being a man, but enough to forgive her and accept his dismissal for the present. The future was another matter. True, he might have forced himself upon her again, had other stormy interviews, but again he knew her too well. Nothing would come of it in her present mood, and he would sacrifice his pride for nothing. Better give her to understand that his pride was equal to her own, perhaps pique her.

If he had only a year of peace before him! But at any moment he might hear of the Peloponnesian fleet in the Ægean and would have to go out. And it might be years before his return. He cursed war, and if he had had any belief in the gods he would have made devout sacrifice in one of the temples and prayed for the bottom to fall out of Sparta in one of her historic earthquakes.

But he had many other things to occupy his mind, and not only business. He had grown almost imperceptibly conscious of a secret purpose in these men who sought his society with such apparent en-

thusiasm, although by no means in all of them. . . . Critias, Theramenes, Adeimantus, Menander. Others. . . . Abstraction, restraint, mental withdrawal, a lapse of interest in the excitements of the moment . . . it was hard to define. More than once he saw them whispering together and intercepted a glance toward himself. He had a feeling they were using him in some way, and it irritated him beyond measure. He had made use of many men, but no man had ever dared make use of him. Tissaphernes had chuckled to himself for a time, but had long since been disillusioned. And these were the men who flattered him most, who hinted at a crown. But his instinct had never been sharper. They had no desire to see him King, Despot, or Tyrant. They were consumed with ambition, all of them ; none knew better than he the signs, however suppressed, of that master-passion. No doubt they were merely testing him, sounding his purpose. But what they were up to he could not hazard a guess. In spite of the faithful Demos (to which these men now pretended to belong), he had a feeling of isolation, and quite aside from his passion for the woman, he longed for the counsel of that friend who in the past had never failed to clarify anything vague in his suspicions. Moreover, she had lived in the society of these men for the past year. With that acute penetrating mind she could hardly have failed to fathom their designs. And at a time so critical she withheld her aid !

Oh, well, a man should be strong enough to stand alone.

In spite of this vague sense of conspiracy and danger in the air—confined, after all, to a small group—there were times when the perpetual incense offered him induced a pleasant feeling of intoxication. Old men as well as young were at his feet. Never had any hero been so fêted. Athens might be the shade of her old self, but such as she was she was his, and offered

a gracious respite after those hard years of war. And she was still the most beautiful of cities with her lofty dazzling temples, not only on the Acropolis but at almost every turn, the superb public buildings of the Agora, statues, shrines, gateways, marble porches. Elysion after the Hades of the north.

Then came the news that the Spartan General Lysander was in the Ægean, and after that all was hurry and bustle, although it was still ten days before the fleet would be ready to go out. But in any case he had had no intention of leaving before the month Boedromion, the first of the autumn, for it was his purpose to render one more service to Athens, a service both picturesque and politic.

For seven years, ever since the invasion of Attica by Agis, the celebration of the Mysteries of Eleusis had been a sadly attenuated affair. The worshippers had been forced to go by sea, a change in their ancient programme that deprived it of half its solemnity.

When Alcibiades announced that he intended personally to escort the procession by land with his troops the joy of the Athenians knew no bounds. Once more they would pay the sacred Twain the full honours due them, and enjoy for the time being their old sense of unbounded power.

The great procession started on a bright morning with a pomp and solemnity never rivalled in its history. The priests of the temples wore new and splendid vestments. Every citizen—and there was none left in Athens who could walk—had on a new himation and a garland on his head. The women of the Eupatridæ, veiled and wreathed, rode in chariots ; wives of humbler citizens in mule-carts filled with flowers. Boys rode ponies and donkeys. Every condition took part, save only they were freemen, neither Metics nor slaves ; although these crowded the housetops to witness the march through the city to the Dipylon Gate.

The priests chanted at intervals. Men flute players accompanied the mighty surge of voices lifted in praise of Iacchus or Demeter. Alcibiades rode at the head of his troops: cavalry, hoplites, and light-armed infantry, all that had not been left to guard the walls and gates. Agis gave no sign.

When night fell torches were lit, and the voices grew even more solemn. A ribbon of fire and sound between the pressing darkness of the hills. Neither voices nor feet showed sign of weariness, although it was thirteen miles from Athens to Eleusis. The worshippers were lifted above themselves, and they entered the great temple half-expecting to see Demeter and Kora risen from that dread empire of Pluto, deep in the nether world.

The Hierophant was there to greet them in all his magnificence, all the others filling sacred office by proud hereditary right. The Initiates were conducted to the inner temple, envied by those who hoped to be pronounced worthy of admission when their period of acid testing was over. Alcibiades was excused from all ceremonies within the temple, as he must remain on guard and receive the constant messages that came in from relays of scouts. It was the best excuse he could offer and it served.

He conducted them back on the following day in equal safety, Agis, presumably, gnawing his fingernails at Decelea.

The whole proceeding was a great triumph for him, and the Eumopolidæ issued a formal pronouncement that he had now made his peace with The Two.

"Much good may that do me," he said to Critias, as they rode together. "But I doubt if the destruction of the Peloponnesian fleet at Proconessus has raised me higher in the esteem of the Athenians than all this mummery. I almost envy them their simplicity."

"Idiots!" said Critias contemptuously. "But now

is the moment to seize a crown. The smiths would sit up all night making it!" And he gave him a slanting look.

"All things, it would seem, come too late," replied Alcibiades lightly. "Eight years ago—but I no longer think of Syracuse. I am sorry you do not go out with me to-morrow."

"I have had enough of war. I remain here on watch in Athens." And once more Alcibiades wondered what dark purpose he might be harbouring. He was apparently as devoted to his old chief as ever, but Alcibiades knew that reckless ambitious nature would not be content to follow another man indefinitely. Should he meet his fate out there in the Ægean, Critias would seek to replace him, no doubt of that. No crown would be offered him, for while the Athenians admired and were often led by him, his violent nature was too cold to radiate the fascination of the few men in their history they had loved passionately—for a time, or off and on! But he had had a taste of power during those four months when the Four Hundred terrorized Athens. It must have been far from satisfying him.

But Alcibiades had no time to speculate on the purposes of Critias and his intimates. He sailed on the morrow. He wrote a note to Tiy asking her for a last interview, but received no answer. He left without so much as a glimpse of her on a roof, but cheered for the moment by the usual vociferous send-off of his countrymen.

IX

He went first to the island of Andros off Eubœa, which had been garrisoned by the enemy, and drove both native and Lacedæmonian troops into the town, plundering the country. He had taken out as Generals

of hoplites Conon, Aristocrates, and Adeimantus, all able men and as trustworthy as any. As the city of Andros offered a stiff resistance, he left Conon to conduct the siege and went on to Samos.

Here he learned the full particulars of the renewed alliance between Persia, represented by Prince Cyrus, and the Lacedæmonians, whose fate was in the hands of Lysander, a clever, patriotic but unscrupulous man, whom Alcibiades had known well in Sparta.

Cyrus had come laden with gold and was not a man of empty promises. He was ardent in the pursuit of the war, not only because he was young and eager for action, but he had inherited the hatred of his house for the Athenians. The Peloponnesians were being well and regularly paid, and he had conceived a warm friendship for Lysander.

No word of the envoys conducted from Abydos to Susa by Pharnabazus had come to Athens, although they had started, after much correspondence and delay, eight months ago. Alcibiades now learned that a severe winter had detained them in a small town in Greater Phrygia, far to the east, and while continuing their journey in the spring they had met Prince Cyrus, who demanded of Pharnabazus that the Athenians be surrendered or detained indefinitely in the interior. The Satrap refused to surrender the men for whose safety he had pledged himself, and had no alternative but to make them prisoners at large in Cappadocia.

Farewell to another hope! If the envoys had reached Susa with the friendly Pharnabazus there was a bare possibility the Great King would have been persuaded to neutrality at least. The old are weary and sometimes forgive. But Cyrus, young, ambitious, refraining from the indulgences that would deplete his energies, burned to avenge the insults of Marathon and Salamis.

He had a long interview with Tissaphernes in Magnuysia, and that humbled Satrap wept with

pleasure at seeing his old comrade again, overwhelming him with apologies for an arrest that was no design of his, and intimating that he had sent orders to Sardis to permit his escape. Alcibiades pretended to believe him, granted forgiveness freely, and asked him to persuade Cyrus to receive envoys sent by himself; intimating in his turn that the old policy of exhaustion should yet be carried out. Neither believed a word the other said, but Tissaphernes was anxious to do all he could to conciliate Alcibiades. He was as susceptible to the charm of that man as ever, and hated Cyrus and the Great King who had humiliated him. That it was a proper reward for his bungling Alcibiades would have been the last to remind him.

But Cyrus refused to receive the envoys, and the more loudly proclaimed his determination to have vengeance on the Athenians.

Alcibiades rarely deluded himself; he had expected little else, but regretted the effect on the men of the fleet. They knew of the regular and generous pay the Lacedæmonians were receiving, and they had never ceased to hope, believing Alcibiades could accomplish all things, that the Satrap would one day fulfil his promises. His failure, which must now be looked upon as final, was a blow to their blind faith in him; they began to mutter their discontent, forgetting that one way or another he had always managed to pay their wages, to say nothing of giving them a generous share of all booty.

He was now at liberty to turn his thoughts to the enemy. Lysander was at Ephesus with a fleet of ninety triremes. Alcibiades took his imposing armament up the coast and paraded it before the harbour, hoping to incite the Lacedæmonians to combat. But Lysander would not come out. He was building new triremes, paid for by Cyrus, and had no intention of risking a battle until his fleet was as strong as the Athenian.

It looked as if there would be inertia for months, and once more money must be raised to pay the men. Thrasybulus had accomplished the reduction of Thasos and was now engaged in fortifying Phokea on the mainland north-east of Chios and many miles from Ephesus. Nearby was the rich Athenian dependency of Kyme, and Alcibiades determined, if Thrasybulus had no money to spare, to levy a heavy tax on a city that hitherto had contributed nothing to the expenses of the war aside from the annual sum exacted by the terms of the Delian League.

Assured by spies that Lysander would not risk a battle before spring, for he was not only building, but overhauling his old triremes, he made ready to go north with a squadron. The fleet would be safe in the harbour of Samos in any case.

Conon, the only one of the Generals he really trusted, was still at Andros. The other two, Adeimantus and Aristocrates, ill concealed their jealousy, as well as their resentment at going out as mere Generals of hoplites. He recalled his suspicions of the former in Athens, and feared what either might do to injure him if left in charge of the fleet.

A subject that gave much food for thought. It would be bad for discipline were a mere commander of a trireme left in charge, besides exciting jealousy in other petty officers. He decided upon an act as bold as it was unprecedented, and perhaps the whimsical turn of his mind had something to do with it. The best of the pilots was a man named Antiochus and an old favourite of his; a man of no initiative or cleverness beyond his calling, but always steady and reliable. On that far-off day on the Pnyx, when the quail had escaped from his mantle, this man had captured it, been handsomely rewarded, and professed devotion ever since.

Alcibiades called him to his tent and told him he would leave the fleet in his charge did he give his

solemn promise not to take it out of the harbour on any provocation whatever; not even if the enemy were blowing their trumpets at the gates.

Antiochus, visibly elated, swore by all the gods he would never betray his trust, and Alcibiades sent for the Generals and acquainted them with his decision. Their astonishment and anger knew no bounds, but they might as well have remonstrated with Zeus himself. They were forced to submit, and left the tent cursing. Alcibiades sailed for Phokea, giving Ephesus a wide berth.

Thrasybulus had taken enough money out of Thasos to pay his own men and no more. Kyme refused to pay irregular tribute. Alcibiades was now desperate. Return to Samos without the wage money he would not, and there was no other resource at present.

It was unheard of to make war on a friendly state, but necessity knows no law. He sent to Samos for another troop of hoplites and plundered the country, the inhabitants taking refuge within the walls and carrying their portable treasure with them. A messenger eluded his vigilance and went to Athens to lodge a complaint, but of this he knew nothing at the time. And before he could lay siege to the city, news was brought to him that drove Kyme out of his head and sent him back to Samos as fast as sails and rowers could carry him.

Antiochus had taken out the fleet and sailed to Ephesus. Entering the narrow mouth of the harbour with two of his ships he had paraded in front of the beached Peloponnesian triremes shouting insults and defying them to come out and fight. Lysander, goaded beyond endurance at being called a coward, a snail, a parasite on Persia, and other epithets calculated to rouse the ire of even a Spartan, detached several ships to pursue the low-bred Athenian, others followed, and an action gradually ensued. But if Antiochus was eager for glory his indulgence was

brief. The fleet was badly handled. The Lacedæmonians, with their usual discipline, had every advantage. The Athenians were pursued to Notion where fifteen of their ships were captured with the crews. Antiochus was slain. The rest of the fleet fled to Samos.

Dire news for the greatest Strategos of his day! He who had fewer mistakes to his account than any commander living, and himself had never lost a battle by land or sea! He cursed his folly at leaving Samos. Better have braved the anger of the men, or taken the whole fleet with him, keeping those Generals under his eye. Not for a moment did he doubt that Antiochus had been bribed by them, furious as they were and willing to risk defeat if only they could have vengeance on him.

But there was no time to waste on lamentations, nor on anything so futile as an investigation. He marshalled the fleet and set sail for Ephesus. The stupid disaster had been a blow to his reputation, and he must retrieve it as quickly as possible.

He ranged his ships in line of battle, and the herald blew a loud blast challenging the enemy to come forth. But Lysander again had no intention of meeting a fleet commanded by Alcibiades until his own was augmented; nor give him an opportunity to wipe out the late dishonour. He feared no other Athenian, and fervently offered up sacrifice for his speedy extinction.

After that, disaster came thick and fast. The Lacedæmonian fleet stole out one night and captured Delphinium, a fortified post on Chios which the Athenians had held for three years past. The messenger from Kyme arrived at Athens and lodged his complaint, a grave one. The Athenians had finally lost all hope of Persia. The fortified city on Andros still held out. They had expected it to fall before Alcibiades left the island.

Three months and not one success to the Athenian fleet. A disgraceful defeat that could be charged to no one but Alcibiades, whatever orders he may have given that miserable pilot. And who in the history of all Hellas had ever left a fleet in the hands of an underling before, ignoring Generals and commanders ?

Cleophon and the Oligarchs were seldom off the Bema. Nor Phæax, Thessalus son of Kimon, Andokides, even Theramenes, Menander, Meletus, and others who had fêted him in Athens. Critias alone held his peace. He neither spoke for nor against. But there were enough without him.

However they might exaggerate and heap abuse upon Alcibiades, they still had indisputable facts to build on. In vain more sober and anxious men pointed out that besieged cities had been long impregnable before this ; it had taken nearly a year to reduce Byzantium. If Alcibiades had left Antiochus in charge of the fleet he must have had reasons that would satisfy even his enemies, for no man was less careless or reckless in war. As for their disappointment at the postponement of a decisive naval battle, how could the mightiest of armaments fight if the enemy would not come out of harbour ? And as for Kyme, Alcibiades had needed money to pay the men and there had been no other way to get it.

But the Athenians were bitterly disappointed. They had expected miracles from Alcibiades. He was the victim of his own reputation. They concluded they had been blinded by his personal fascination and trusted him too far. When a petty officer named Thrasybulus came from Samos, as the spokesman of the Generals and commanders, and accused Alcibiades of spending his time with convivial friends and Ionian women instead of attending to business, the bewildered Athenians were willing to believe him, for they recalled exploits of the past.

They dared not summon him to Athens to defend

himself lest they should fall once more under his spell. Although men who had never posed as his friends warned them that if they parted with Alcibiades they would work their own ruin, they would not listen, but passed a vote dismissing him from the command, and set out ten other Generals to take his place.

Alcibiades, when he received this staggering news, felt as if the visible universe were crashing about him. It almost tempted him to believe in the gods; it were as if he had been carried up to Olympus, courted and flattered, and then hurled derisively to earth.

He was only forty-three and his career was at an end. After Syracuse there was still adventure and hope. Now the future was a blank. He had no chance to avenge himself upon Athens did he wish, and he did not. His only feeling for that city, as easily swayed as a leaf in a light wind, was contempt mingled with pity. He well knew what her fate would be.

No one blamed his folly in leaving the fleet at the mercy of his personal enemies more severely than he. But the immediate past should have been taken into account. Three months against three years! Well, let them go to Hades as fast as they might. He was done with them. He sent a letter to Saon, equipped a galley, and sailed for the north.

BOOK VII

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I

THRACE was a bleak and bitter country in winter. One snow storm followed another and the wind howled unceasingly. Alcibiades' castle, or fort, was on a bluff on the Thracian Chersonese, almost opposite the large Athenian town of Lampsakus in Asia, but a mile and three-quarters across the Hellespont. A wall as high as the fort surrounded the enclosure, and when the weather permitted he walked on the ramparts for hours at a time watching the dark seething waters of the Hellespont through which so often he had sailed on his victorious enterprises. Occasionally a trading vessel crept by, dodging the blocks of ice floating down from the Euxine through the Propontis on their way to the Ægean Sea; but the scene for the most part was as desolate and deserted as the Styx. He half expected to see Charon plying his boat, the dead hanging limply across the prow.

The country was no better; monotonous fields flat in winter; even the mountains in the background were bare. The village of Byzanthé below the fort was a mere handful of huts, and Ægospotami, just beyond, little more than a beach. The Thracian cities of the interior were larger but quite as rude. Wild horsemen were constantly dashing over the plain; weather meant nothing to them.

He was friendly with all the tribes. Many had known him since his early manhood, when he had paid his first visit to his estate. The chiefs or "Kings" spent nights in his house and he in theirs. Stupid drinking parties and stupider games. Men heavy with food and

wine danced in full armour, staging sham battles in the smoky hall ; the palm of victory going to him who best simulated death, while the others howled their lamentations over a warrior corpse.

At the banquet the host broke a loaf into pieces and flung them at favoured guests. He had received one in the eye that nearly blinded him. They drank from horns and spilt wine on their beards and tunics—made from the skins of wild beasts. His host of last night was intensely proud of a wife who had been tattooed all over by a Scythian.

But their favourite game was one he had witnessed some nights since, and heaven knew how many times before in the past four months. It was called quite simply "Hanging." A noose was affixed to the rafters and below it was a stone that rolled easily. One of the guests, sickle in hand, mounted the stone and put his head in the halter. The stone was rolled from under him, and as he spun in the air he saved himself by cutting the rope with the sickle—were he quick enough. Three men had performed this rite successfully on the last occasion, but the fourth was hanged—to the jovial shouts of the spectators. This was true sport.

Charming society ! Charming people ! And as far as he knew he must spend the rest of his life with them. There was no other place of refuge that he knew of. All cities of the earth were closed to him. Athens would have shut her gates, even had he the least desire to live there as a nonentity, treated negligibly by all who had fought for his favour. There was no other city in Hellas fit to live in save Corinth, who would show him as little hospitality as Athens. Syracuse and Acragas were closed to all Athenians, and Carthage well knew his former intentions. Crete held two persons he did not care to meet in his day of disgrace. Gaul and Germania were as savage as Thrace. Egypt ? Strange things had happened in that country. The

secret revolt of the men had flared into open defiance under Prince Amyrtæus, and they were now, if not dominant, at least on equal terms both political and social with the women. The prince, who was also a favourite with the sex that had ruled so long and oppressively, had gained their consent to an open defiance of Persia. Egypt, for the present at least, was once more an independent state.

Alcibiades with his great reputation and his personal glamour was the last man to be welcomed by an ambitious prince. Persia might have been possible had it not been for Cyrus, who hated him and all he represented.

An exile truly.

There were flourishing subject cities of Athens on both sides of the Chersonese and on the Propontis, but they had extended no welcome to one who had fallen from the favour of their over-lords. His only hope lay in Pharnabazus, who must return in due course to his satrapy. Then he might have not only intelligent companionship with a gentleman once more, but possibly receive help in rending the veil of the future.

He had commanded the friendship and admiration of these Thracians if only because he could out-drink them, and they would have marched under his banner whithersoever he might choose to lead them. They knew no life but war. But even if he took Byzantium, of what use? It would mean being starved out in a siege during the following summer. Here he was doomed to rot.

A sudden downfall of rain, on this afternoon when he had been staring at the blank wall of his future and sardonically contemplating the present, drove him from the ramparts and inside the fort. In the centre of the low building was a large hall, both long and wide but not square. The walls were of stone rough-hewn, the roof supported by heavy beams. Braziers were

of little use in this climate and there was a big fireplace at the end with a hole in the roof for the escape of smoke—when the wind was favourable; otherwise it filled the room. There were hanging-lamps that smoked and stank. The couches were covered by the skins of wild beasts, presented by his Thracian friends. Other savage trophies hung on the walls. It was the lair of a pirate, and Alcibiades sometimes wondered if he would not take to piracy in sheer desperation. It had afforded a merry career in the Ægean until Pericles put an end to it.

Saon when packing his clothes had filled a chest with his books: poets, historians, philosophers. But he found little solace in the minds of men who lived a life of ease the while they immortalized themselves writing about men of action. He too was a man of action, and it was for poets and historians to write of *his* deeds for other leisurely persons to read; or listen to when declaimed by rhapsodists in the Odeum and the Agora.

To read of Hector, Achilles, Agamemnon, engaged in mighty combat on that plain of Troy he could see from his towers in clear weather, while he was shut up in a tomb on the Hellespont, with the wind howling like the furies of Orestes with no prospect in all the years that remained to him of another deed of glory—Oh, no! Better drink with these Thracian boors and forget.

II

He slammed the door behind him, threw his heavy mantle on a chair, and walked up and down the big room with his arms swinging, too restless to sit down. Saon had lit the lamps and the wind was kind. Great logs blazed and the wind took a proper course.

There might be worse refuges, he reflected grimly. The room was warm and comfortable, if barbarous;

and he had a large amount of money securely hidden. Moreover, he had for many years received considerable sums from Thrace; not only from the corn of his estate, but from a gold mine which he owned in partnership with two of these kings. It was in a mountain on the mainland, and he had visited it only once, but as far as he knew he had never been cheated. Many gold darics had come out of that mine. For several years before he left for Syracuse he had received no revenue from this source, for there had been an invasion by the King of Macedonia, but that trouble had been settled shortly after he left Sparta. He would be a rich man for the rest of his life. Much good would that do him.

No one in Athens had known of this resource, and his friends, Young Pericles—now a General!—Anytus, Polytion, Callias, even Aristophanes, had sent him word by Saon that their personal treasure was always at his disposal. Some no doubt would have visited him had it been possible. But Athens would give none of her men leave of absence. They must serve with the fleet or in the city.

And not a word from Tiy! Even in his downfall she had not relented. She knew what his solitude must be, the hopelessness of his future. She might at least have sent him a letter, a message. She had announced her intention of forgetting him; no doubt she had succeeded. Zeus knew there was nothing to remind the world of him in these days. He thought of her often. With her, exile would be supportable. It was the last touch of tragedy that he had not been able to win and hold her. He had lost all, truly.

Saon brought in his supper; coarse fare cooked by the wife of the captain of his garrison. He dined alone, the guard in their mess-room off the kitchen. There they drank and sang half the night, taking turns in the watch towers, where they probably slept until relieved.

"Well, Saon," he said as he attacked a large hunk of beef, half-cooked, that reminded him of Sparta, "how goes it with you? Do you like the Thracians any better?"

"They are pigs, O Master. But better than the Athenians, whom may the gods curse."

"Athens was cursed the day Pericles died, and again when she drove Alcibiades to Sparta. They gave her one more chance—and she sent ten Generals to Samos! Not one of them knows his business save Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus, and neither is the equal of Lysander. But I think no more of Athens. What shall we do with ourselves, Saon? Live here, in this gods-forsaken hole, swilling all night with boors for the rest of our lives? I infer you make merry in the mess and hope you do. As for these Thracian females, I doubt if you find them more fascinating than I."

"Filthy trollops. Nor do I drink much, Master. And the gods forbid we live here too long. This is no life for you. You can hold more than most men, but as men grow older they drink less if they are wise. If you stay here I fear you will do little else—and you might better throw yourself into the Hellespont."

Alcibiades shrugged "You would deprive me of the one consolation left me, dear Saon. If I stay here! Where then should I go? Answer me that riddle and I'll drink but one goblet of wine a day—if you will find the goblet. How I hate these horns!"

Saon sighed. "I know not, Master, but you were never meant for a life of inaction. I trust to the gods to relent and lead you forth again."

"Well, hurry them up with sacrifice. Now bring in that mess they call a sweet, and go and find what companionship you can with the guard."

Thracian suppers inspired him neither to thought nor to exercise. He threw himself on a couch by the fire and fell asleep.

He was awakened by clamour within and without.

Soldiers were running into the guard-room for their shields. There was shouting on the ramparts, tramping of feet in the house.

He sprang up in a glow of delighted anticipation. The fort had been attacked by some hostile tribe—or by a Persian force from over the Hellespont. Action of some sort at last! He ran to his room to buckle on his shield and get his sword and dagger; but before he crossed the threshold he became aware that a sudden silence had succeeded the turmoil. He heard a man's loud laugh.

He almost stamped with vexation. Another endless night of unbroken monotony. And then he saw Saon running across the hall to the entrance doors. The man made no reply to his peremptory "What is it? Whom are you admitting?" He gave a bark of disgust. Some Thracian oaf come to make a night of it. But why all that excitement?

He sauntered forward, cursing diplomacy, but the Thracians were the only friends he had left and friends they must remain.

Saon had taken down the heavy bars and thrown open the doors. The rain had passed and he saw that the heavens were bright with stars. Some one entered, a very tall man wrapped in a heavy cloak and with a closely fitting cap on his head. The lantern over the door gave a feeble light, and he wondered who this stranger could be, for that he was no Thracian he saw at a glance. This man had the air of great cities.

And then the visitor advanced into the room and he was conscious of nothing but a great stillness. The lashing of the waves against the cliffs, the rising wind, passed beyond sense. He stood in a void, and a voice came to him as from a long distance.

"Yes, it is I, Alcibiades. You have time for me in your life at last and I have come."

III

It was on a day in summer two years later that they stood on the walls watching the Athenian fleet sail up the Hellespont. Lampsakus opposite had surrendered to the Lacedæmonians less than a month before and its harbour was crowded with their ships.

It was an exciting moment! If Lysander could be drawn out a great battle would take place under their eyes, and although Alcibiades thrilled at the prospect he ground his teeth. He should have been in command of that fleet, not a second-rate man like Conon, who had not even taken Andros, and had permitted himself to be blocked up in Mytilene while the great battle of Arginusæ last year was being won by the Athenians.

But Alcibiades never thought of Arginusæ if he could help it. The Athenians had been victorious, but better for some if they had lost. A storm had come up and they had made no effort to save wounded men on the twenty-five wrecked triremes, or clinging to planks in the water. The Generals had blamed Theramenes, insisting they had given him orders to attempt a rescue. Theramenes—hastening to Athens ahead of them—accused the Generals of indifference, asserting boldly that no orders had been given to him or to any one else. For some inscrutable reason they had believed Theramenes. The Generals, instead of being tried separately, as was their constitutional right, were condemned to death by the Ecclesia. Among them was Pericles the Younger. Poor Aspasia!

It was a splendid sight, those one hundred and eighty triremes as they rounded a point above Sestos and sailed up the Hellespont, their coloured sails curving gracefully in the light wind, their figure-heads shining, three long banks of rowers bending rhythmically. Hoplites with shields and spears. Cavalry in their scarlet capes. Glittering helmets with sweeping horse-hair plumes. A familiar sight! And Athens had

melted the last of her treasure—the treasure he had displayed at Olympia—to build and equip this armament. And given the very last of her men. The last fierce burst of energy she would ever be capable of were this fleet destroyed.

But these men were full of pride and hope. They had won a great battle a year before, and they held the Peloponnesians in contempt. Kallikrates, a more energetic and competent General in their estimation than Lysander, had lost that battle and his own life. This man seemed only to care to creep upon weak cities and overcome them. Not once had he given battle.

But Alcibiades knew Lysander. He had had many conversations with him in Sparta. Slow, wily, bent upon avoiding risks ; one to wait for the right moment, and then pounce with the deadly certainty of a beast in the forest.

Nevertheless, and in spite of his regrets, he was filled with pride at sight of that armament. And it would be something at least to witness a great battle once more.

But it was soon evident there would be no engagement this day. The Athenian fleet displayed their magnificence for two hours before the Lacedæmonians in harbour, challenging them to battle. The only response was a heavy silence. As evening fell they turned their ships and sailed across the Hellespont in a slanting direction.

"Surely they are going to Sestos!" exclaimed Alcibiades. "It cannot be possible——"

"Yes—yes——" said Tiy. "They are aiming for Ægospotami. Perhaps they wish to be closer in the morning."

"An open beach! The Lacedæmonians could descend upon them in the night. But there is not a General worth his salt among them. Conon—Adeimantus—and three who have never been anything but commanders of triremes before · Menander, Tydeus, Philokles!"

He had recognized them and many others, for the ships had passed almost under the walls of the fort.

"I could almost believe," he went on wrathfully, "they have come here with some secret understanding and mean to sell themselves to the Lacedæmonians. Conon is an honest man, but Adeimantus is a scoundrel. But why Conon allowed himself to be persuaded—by Zeus, they are beaching!"

"Well, you cannot do anything, Alcibiades," said Tiy. "So let us go down and forget them."

But although Alcibiades for two incredible years had forgotten many things in the companionship of Tiy—diversified by secret visits from Pharnabazus and a winter in the lively city of Byzantium, now governed by one of his friends who had defied Athens and extended a royal welcome—he spent a restless night and was on the walls at dawn. The Athenians once more sailed up to Lampsakus and once more were ignored. The Lacedæmonian and allied ships were fully manned and prepared for battle, the land force disposed ashore to render assistance, but it was evident that Lysander had no intention of suiting the enemy's convenience. More and more ominous.

And so it happened on the third day.

The Athenians, when at rest, were not only in a precarious position, but the men were obliged to forage in neighbouring towns for provisions. The ships were half-deserted for hours at a time.

Finally Alcibiades could contain his impatience no longer. Had he hated Athens he would have made one last effort to save her, for she was the city of his birth and his youth. And he had fought and bled for her too many times ever to be indifferent to her fate. He could not stand there on his walls and see her last hope destroyed when those Generals, if honest, might listen to one whose experience and supreme abilities no man had ever questioned.

"They all hate me," he said to Tiy, "and Zeus

knows what my reception will be, but I'd be less than a man if I didn't chance it."

He sent for his horse and rode rapidly to Ægospotami, but a mile down the coast. It was shortly after the noon hour. The soldiers and seamen were sprawled on the beach and along the banks of the river, asleep. The tents of the Generals were at some distance from the camp. In front of them sat a guard playing dice.

These men stood up and saluted automatically, forgetting for the moment that this commanding presence was no longer entitled to their deference. They answered his questions readily. Conon was in Sestos buying provisions, but Adeimantus, Menander, and Philokles were in the large tent at the end of the row.

Alcibiades threw his bridle to one of the men and entered the tent without ceremony. The Generals were playing draughts and he saw at once they had been drinking. They greeted him with scowling faces. None rose.

Alcibiades had not lost the habit of regarding inferior men as worms; indeed it is doubtful if he would have been abashed in the presence of Great Zeus himself. Nevertheless he had not come to antagonize them, and his tone as he began was conciliatory.

"We are old comrades in arms," he said. "I hope you will listen to me—who have lived for two years on this coast—when I warn you that no fleet has ever beached in a more dangerous position. Lysander——"

"Lysander is a fool," interrupted Adeimantus, his sharp narrow face contracted in a sneer. "A fool and a coward."

"He is neither. I knew him well in Sparta——"

"Where you betrayed and all but ruined your country," shouted Menander, a big man with a weak obstinate handsome face, who struggled to his feet and looked ready to fight on the spot. But Philokles pulled him down.

"We are willing to listen to what you have to say, Alcibiades," said this one sober man of the party, "for your experience has been great. But I agree with the others. The Lacedæmonians do not intend to fight; they have not forgotten the beating we gave them at Arginusæ. It makes no difference where we stay, and this beach is more convenient than the harbour of Sestos."

Alcibiades turned his back on the others and addressed himself to Philokles, whom he knew to be a reasonable man and with no cause for animosity against himself. "And why do you suppose the Lacedæmonians have gone to the vast expense of sending a fleet to the Ægean if they do not mean to fight?" he asked. "The idea is absurd. And I know Lysander. There is no abler man in Sparta. And no Lacedæmonian is a coward, whatever else he may be; nor is there any braver than Lysander. He is pursuing some deep policy. Be sure he will strike when you least expect. If you can persuade him to battle you may be as successful as at Arginusæ, for your fleet is superior to his. But for Zeus' sake leave this place and go to Sestos. As long as you stay here you are inviting disaster."

Philokles stroked his beard. He was an amiable dignified man, of no striking mental equipment, but a brave soldier. He had been a commander under Alcibiades for a year in the Propontis, and betrayed a slight natural vanity in this altered relationship.

"There may be truth in what you say," he remarked dubiously. "Conon would have preferred Sestos, but Adeimantus persuaded him of the virtues of this open beach, so convenient for a speedy formation——"

"Yes, and here we stay!" exclaimed Adeimantus. "And doubly so now. We take no advice from a disgraced exile."

Alcibiades turned and looked at him piercingly. "Are you sure, Adeimantus," he asked gently, "that

you have no other reason for remaining at Ægospotami?"

"What do you mean?" Adeimantus sprang to his feet and laid his hand on his dagger. "For two obols I'd put an end to you once for all."

Alcibiades, with a swift movement, leaned across the table, wrested the dagger from a limp hand and flung it across the tent. "I meant exactly what I insinuated," he said. "I believe there is treason in this army and that you are at the head of it. That you, and perhaps others, have some private understanding with Lysander."

"Curse you!" Adeimantus, almost in tears, pounded the table. "You lie! You lie! I am a devoted son of Athens. I'd die for her to-morrow. How dare you come here and insult me——"

"How much did you pay Antiochus to take the fleet to Ephesus and precipitate an engagement?" Alcibiades' voice was still even, but the man quailed before the lightning in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" he sputtered. "Do you think I would have risked precious lives under that fool—that *you* left in charge of the fleet?"

"How much?" asked Alcibiades inexorably.

The man threw back his head and laughed. He was too drunk to keep up further pretence, and he hated Alcibiades as he had never hated any man. "Well, it ruined you! You insulted me by taking me out as a General of hoplites and then placing a pilot over my head, and I saw to it that you were well punished. And it cost me nothing, for Antiochus was killed."

Alcibiades turned on his heel. "Will you come without?" he asked Philokles.

"Repeat my message to Conon," he said when they were alone. "I rely upon you to do that, for I believe you to be an honest man."

"I will tell him, but he thinks Adeimantus a great

General and is much under his influence. I doubt if it will do any good. And I cannot believe that Adeimantus would commit a crime like that. He is too anxious for glory."

"He is a ruined man, like the rest of the Athenians whose fortunes have gone to support the war. With the fleet destroyed he could attain to power in Athens, supported by the Lacedæmonians—who would dictate terms to what was left of the Demos. I know there has been an oligarchical conspiracy on foot, and with Sparta, these last three years. No doubt they were bitterly disappointed that the Generals at Arginusæ were honest men. Adeimantus is one of the most violent of the Oligarchs. But there is no more for me to say. I have done what I could. Convince Conon if you can."

The two men nodded to each other and Alcibiades was about to mount his horse when Philokles exclaimed: "There goes Tydeus. I will follow him into his tent and tell him what you have said. He does not readily listen to advice, but I may persuade him to speak with you."

Alcibiades strolled along the bank of the river. He expected little from Tydeus, a pompous man of scant inches who walked with a strut, and no doubt was full of importance in his new command. And many years ago he had caught him cheating at a quail fight. But he waited.

Loud words came from the tent. They ceased abruptly. A small man ran out and up to Alcibiades, his face convulsed with fury. "Get out of this camp as fast as you can," he shouted. "If you don't I'll have you arrested and sent to the Lacedæmonians. Agis would give a thousand talents for your head. How dare you come to the Athenians and dictate—tell *us* what to do! You! We command this fleet. You are disgraced and forgotten. You came here in the hope of rousing these men to follow you and murder us——"

Alcibiades waited for no more. The man was standing between him and his horse. He picked him up by the belt of his tunic, shook him like a rat, flung him into the river, mounted, and rode away.

But whether Philokles told Conon or not the fleet remained at Ægospotami. Every day after its parade before the harbour, two or three sailing vessels had followed it and scouted about with the obvious intention of learning the habits of the personnel.

On the fifth day Alcibiades noticed that a man on one of those ships lifted a bright shield in a manner to catch the rays of the sun. It was at the hour when the men were on shore, and many of them off in quest of a meal.

"That was a signal!" he exclaimed. "I'd be willing to wager my last daric that the end has come—yes! Look!"

The Lacedæmonian fleet was leaving the harbour in perfect order. A land force was marching along the shore. The ships descended like swift birds of prey upon the careless Athenians. He saw men running about frantically; shouts came down the wind. There was a desperate attempt to man the triremes, but they were either at anchor or beached, and the men were too few.

Eight triremes got away. Alcibiades learned afterward that Conon's personal squadron and the sacred ship *Paralus* were always fully equipped. After an ineffectual attempt to get the fleet into a condition for resistance the General had fled while he could.

A hundred and seventy-two ships were taken without the loss of a Peloponnesian. Many of the Athenians had fled down the coast or to the interior, but four thousand were captured, including the Generals Philokles, Adeimantus, and Tydeus; Menander escaped.

Alcibiades heard the fate of these men a few days

later. Philokles, the commanders of triremes, the soldiers and seamen, were massacred. Adeimantus and Tydeus were not.

Thousands more took refuge in the cities along the coast. Lysander spared their lives on condition of their immediate return to Athens. It was his policy to crowd that city and starve it into surrender as quickly as possible.

The sun of Athens had set. Alcibiades was avenged.

IV

With the Lacedæmonians masters of practically all the Greek world it was no longer safe to remain in the Chersonese. Alcibiades knew that the flame of Agis' hatred burned as brightly as ever, and that the dearest wish of Sparta, now that Athens was subdued once for all, was to see him marched in chains through the city on his way to final extinction.

His Thracian friends would have protected him, but that meant living in the interior among a coarse and brutal people. He shuddered at the prospect. Pharnabazus, who was disgusted with the Lacedæmonians and hated Cyrus, invited him to live close to a village of his satrapy and not far from his summer palace. A house large enough for his needs could be speedily erected, and there would be constant and unrestrained intercourse.

Alcibiades accepted his offer for still other reasons than the safe haven it offered and the pleasure of the Satrap's society. New schemes were forming in that restless head.

He left the castle with regret, however. He had been very happy there. A curious happiness for Alcibiades, he sometimes thought with a smile; and, even with Tiy, perhaps impossible ten years earlier. One woman had sufficed and interested him for two years and three months, nor was there any decrease

in his ardour or in his pleasure in the companionship of this woman, whose mind banished his desire for the companionship of other men, and no small part of whose fascination lay in a persistent enigmatic quality that ever eluded him. Her love was no less than his, but he was made subtly aware that she was still Tiy, a daughter of the Pharaohs and a woman out of Egypt. Save in certain arrogantly masculine moments this troubled him little. She was his and he believed she would never leave him.

It would not be safe for her to be known as an Egyptian on Persian territory, and it was finally decided she should bear the Greek name Timandra and pass as an Athenian. No one in a Phrygian village had ever seen an Egyptian, and but few Greeks had come their way.

Tiy had brought to the castle her Nubian, a cook, and a woman slave for personal attendance. The Nubian had been sent back to Athens to take the other members of her household to Egypt. Her understanding of the oligarchical plotting with Sparta had been thorough; she knew that Athens would never recall Alcibiades again.

She had also brought chests full of clothes and treasure; other treasure she had sent to Crete; although it was long since she had had any correspondence with Persia, and it was doubtful if they would ever have use for her again, she knew the vengeance of the Great King would be swift and sure did he discover that she loved Alcibiades, and arrived at the conclusion she had served him from the first. And he might reconquer Egypt at any moment.

The village was situated on the Propontis, mountains in the background and before it a magnificent sweep of water whose shores were studded with walled cities —now trembling at the nod of Sparta.

The house with its two large rooms, built hastily for their reception, was a rude structure without,

but Pharnabazus had been able to exercise his generosity within. The walls were covered with tapestries, superb and fantastic, the floors with Sardian rugs. The tables were of polished curled maple with ivory feet; the couches and chairs stood on legs of silver, and none in the royal palace at Susa were more luxurious. The place was full of rich and glowing colour, and the Satrap had also sent an abundant supply of gold and silver dishes. The cook was an excellent one and Saon ruled the household. They were extremely comfortable.

The kitchen was detached and the servants slept in the village. The house was situated in a little natural park of oak trees and was secluded enough to please both lovers and fugitives. They rode over the country and sailed on the inland sea. The villagers had no suspicion of the identity of either. For that matter no villager in a Persian satrapy dared think.

It was a safe asylum and a pleasant one, far more comfortable than the Thracian fortress, but Tiy soon observed that Alcibiades was restless and preoccupied. He was only forty-five, an age when if all had gone well he would have had many years of power and action before him.

If he had had any lingering hope of Athens it must have perished when the Lacedæmonians took the city, razed the long walls, and placed the fate of its inhabitants in the hands of The Thirty. Thirty Oligarchs bent upon the utter destruction of the Demos. Critias was the leading spirit of that infamous government, and had given rein to all his long smouldering cruelty and lust for power. Every man who opposed him, every man whom he had long hated, every man of potential danger to his ascendancy was ruthlessly murdered or executed. All who dared take arms to rebel were massacred. The reign of the Four Hundred would stand in history as a pale forecast of this terrible consummation. Theramenes, although one of the

original Thirty, was soon disposed of by Critias and hemlock. Moderates and trimmers were not to be tolerated.

Tiy found it natural at first to attribute Alcibiades' moodiness to this final disaster to Athens, as well as to the formal decree of exile that had been pronounced upon him by The Thirty. But she dismissed the idea. He had weathered too much, and he was too philosophical to brood upon what he could do nothing to prevent. No man was more unaffectedly capable of living in the hour, the minute, quaffing the cup filled with the wine of life, were it offered, and trusting to the morrow to refill it. He used his foresight when circumstances demanded, but it slept when he was no longer able to control his destiny. Years had set their stamp on him, but at times he seemed to her as young as on the night she had first met him. His beauty had but matured, and he could be the gayest of companions both with her and the adoring Pharnabazus.

But something to which she had no clue had tilted the even balance of his mind, and she was disturbed, for he had never before failed to take her into his confidence. His second self she was in very truth. She finally concluded that he wished to speak but hesitated for some reason best known to himself, and determined to force his hand.

V

A FIRE was blazing on the hearth and they sat before it. A silence had fallen and he was staring eagerly into the flames as if the pictures they formed were omens that would answer the riddle of his future. Tiy taxed him abruptly.

"Alcibiades, what is it you have in mind? You have received many letters these past months. I have asked you no questions——"

"Those letters were from exiles banished from cities of Asia Minor and the north by the Councils Lysander has set up in every one of the former Athenian dependencies and allied states. Many also have escaped from Athens. They would have me collect an army and go into action. I consider nothing so futile, and have replied to none of them. If I have not spoken it is because I have other things more agreeable to talk to you about." And he smiled at her across the hearth, where she sat in her warm white chiton and a gold net on her head. And then he added: "I discussed with you in the past all matters worthy of your attention. These were not."

"No, the time is not ripe for any such enterprise as that—if ever. What, then, is it? You have long years before you. You will not be content to live in this Phrygian village for ever. You were more or less passive as long as the war was in progress, for there was always the possibility that Athens would triumph and once more recall you. But now!"

"There was no hope for the Athenians with those Generals—unless from some unimaginable disaster to the Lacedæmonians. But—perhaps—no doubt there is always an unadmitted hope until all hope is extinguished by some final disaster . . . there is the interest of suspense. But *now*—as you say!"

She gave him a penetrating look. "Then there is nothing left but Persia. And Darius is dead."

He leaned on the arm of his chair, pulling at the curl above his ear. There was a smile on his lips but none in his eyes.

"Yes," he said slowly, after a moment. "My only hope is there. I have been thinking—talking with Pharnabazus—but nothing is settled. I did not wish to speak of it to you lest it come to nothing—the more as—well—if I should be forced to leave you for a time, why think of it until the last moment?"

He paused and she asked calmly: "What is it,

Alcibiades? I have never imagined this could go on for ever. Life is a desert with oases; the wanderer must ever go forth! And you would always return to me."

He sprang up and seated himself on the arm of her chair, but although he drew her into a warm embrace she knew that his purpose was to avoid her eyes while he unburdened his mind.

"For that I should live," he said fervently. "And if when we were in Thrace I could not have endured the thought of a parting, however brief—and now—well, I am Alcibiades. I love you no less, but I cannot stagnate in a Phrygian village."

"No one understands Alcibiades better than I! And I prefer the truth to the uncertainty that has worried me of late. Go on."

"Pharnabazus has positive information that Cyrus is plotting to dethrone his brother; he can raise a great army and the Lacedæmonians will augment it. We have the full particulars. Were I the one to carry the warning to Artaxerxes he would receive me with favour. I could become a far greater figure at his court than at the little one of Tissaphernes; or even than Themistocles ever was when in Susa. There would be a career worth having! And one with a thousand possibilities. Persia has spent a vast sum of money and is as far from having conquered Hellas as ever. I would spur her on to building the greatest navy the world has ever seen—and have my revenge on Sparta, as well as living a life of action once more."

"A great enterprise and worthy of Alcibiades. I shall go to Susa with you——"

"No, no! That is quite impossible. Later you will join me, of course, but I must prepare the way. I have thought it all out. You will go to Crete, write to Artaxerxes that you have no sympathy with the rebels, and announce your intention of accepting a long-standing invitation to his Court. There we could

meet again. I, knowing nothing of the sinister rôle you played in my life, fall in love with you and marry you. There will be no opposition to that, for the King would have a spy at my hearth——"

"A very pretty plot, Alcibiades, but I have no fear of the wrath of Persia, now that Darius is dead. I know Artaxerxes, who was in Egypt when I was there last. He is easily managed by women. I shall tell him I persuaded you to go to Susa and offer your services, so universally renowned. If he should conceive any suspicion of your integrity, I shall be there to remind him that Athens is a corpse, and that your hatred of the Lacedæmonians is even greater than their fear of you. Yes, I shall go, Alcibiades, and you must admit it is for the best."

He left the arm of her chair and walked up and down the room. "Very well," he said after a moment. "If you are sure there is no danger—Zeus knows I hated the thought of leaving you behind——"

"And I had no thought of being left behind in the manner of women. But what of Pharnabazus? Is he willing to further your plan? Without him you can do nothing—or may not——" Her voice dropped meditatively.

Alcibiades made an exclamation of impatience. "He thinks it a great idea and he hates Cyrus and Lysander. But those two are all-powerful on the Asiatic coast, and he fears that did he identify himself with an enemy they still regard as dangerous, and so hostile a mission, it might mean his ruin. Could Cyrus prove his innocence he might not be able to return here—but there are other satrapies in this vast empire far from the vengeance of Lysander. He would have nothing to fear from Cyrus if Artaxerxes is persuaded of the plot to dethrone him—and we have proof enough."

"Well, if you cannot persuade him, there is an alternative. I will go to Persia, and alone. I can

promise that you will be summoned quickly—what is that ? ”

There was a sound of rapid hoof-beats, and a moment later they stopped before the house. Alcibiades went to the door. He returned immediately.

“ A summons from Pharnabazus,” he said. “ He wishes to see me at once. Something of importance, no doubt, or he would not send for me at this hour.”

It was his habit when going out at night to wear his uniform and arms, for he had been threatened with assassination more than once, and he went into the bedroom to change.

“ Shall I send this man for Saon ? ” he asked. “ I have never left you alone before. Odd, he did not invite you as usual, but the hour is late——”

Tiy laughed. “ I too have a dagger,” she said. “ And if I no longer look like a man I still have a man's strength. I am far more interested to know why he has sent for you, and hope it is to tell you that he will start with us for Susa to-morrow.”

VI

The beautiful summer palace of Pharnabazus—which he sometimes occupied the year round—was situated in the uplands but a few miles from the village. It was a large lightly-built structure, gay in colour without as within, and surrounded by a pleasure park with gardens, terraces, shaded walks (where Alcibiades had often walked with Tiy, for Pharnabazus entertained them lavishly), canopied bowers, fountains, lagoons, woods of oaks and firs. Here he lived in the usual state and luxury of a Persian Satrap, although less a slave to the senses than most of his countrymen.

He received Alcibiades in a great apartment hung with tapestries in which birds and flowers were oddly interwoven, and the rugs were so deep they seemed to hold and caress the feet. He was not reclining on his

cushions but pacing up and down the room; a short square man with a noble head and a benign countenance. As he turned, Alcibiades saw that his brows were knit, but his face lit up instantly and he went forward rapidly and embraced his visitor.

"Welcome, and pardon me for summoning you at such a late hour. I would have gone to you—but—well—let us sit here."

Alcibiades threw himself on the cushions and looked at him apprehensively. "Well, Pharnabazus? What is it? Has some one overheard our conversations and reported to Cyrus?"

"No one in my household speaks Greek. But it is bad enough. I have—there is a plot on hand to assassinate you."

Alcibiades shrugged. "Another? Who is it? Agis?"

"He is the instigator. But the—the—request comes through Cyrus. No doubt he is willing enough. He can have heard nothing of your knowledge and your intention to go to Susa, but he has discovered that you are here and he knows what you are capable of. There must be many in his confidence, and he knows what men will do for gold. An order came to Lysander from the ephors, instigated, as I said, by Agis, to see that you are put to death. No one can issue orders to a Satrap but the Great King himself, but I have received a request from both Cyrus and Lysander to procure your assassination." And he smiled at his friend.

"Zeus!" muttered Alcibiades. "Would that we had started for Susa. When will that enterprise be carried through now?"

He got up and strode impatiently back and forth. He felt no fear of assassination, but was appalled at this threat of danger to his future plans. But he was never without resource.

"Let us set out in the morning," he said eagerly. "We shall reach Susa in safety, for there is no one to

waylay us. There lies *your* one hope, also. If you refuse to accomplish my death, they will send assassins of their own, and you too may fall a victim—or Cyrus would trump up some tale of laxity in regard to the Lacedæmonians and secret sympathy with the Athenians, and take it to the Great King. Let us start before daybreak."

"It might be done—not to-morrow, for a Satrap may not leave his trust on a moment's notice. But ten days hence. Meanwhile, it would be best for you and Tiy to return to your castle. The Lacedæmonian governors in Sestos and Lampsakus would not molest you without orders, and you have your Thracians to protect you——"

"I'll not run and hide before any threat of assassination! To go in haste to Susa is another matter. And I am safe until they are convinced you have no intention of countenancing their dark purpose——"

"I am not so sure," interrupted Pharnabazus. "They know of my friendship for you. . . . It would take too long to send to Susa and receive the order of the Great King for your death, even were he willing to issue it. They may send their own men. Take refuge in the castle. I dare not even place a guard about your house—that would rouse their suspicions at once——"

"No, no, Pharnabazus. I well know that were I as far away as that, prudence would overcome you, and there would be no more of going to Susa. Here I stay. And now I go, for I have left Tiy alone. But send me a summons in the dawn. I'll not go to bed!"

VII

WHEN he reached the house he found Tiy still sitting by the fire. There was an eager light in her eyes.

"Well?" she asked. "What is it? You have not been long gone."

Tiy was not the type of woman whose nerves must be spared. He told her of the plot to assassinate him and of the necessity for quick action.

"We must leave here at dawn," he said. "Pharnabazus would not promise, but he is fully alive to the danger and I believe he will go with us. Saon can pack and follow."

She spoke with instant decision. "Yes, we must go with or without Pharnabazus. Ten days! Those men will not wait on the convenience of a Satrap. If the Lacedæmonians are dilatory Cyrus is not; he is a man of action. You have been betrayed by some member of that household. By old Magæus, no doubt. Pharnabazus is too honest to suspect his uncle, but I have never trusted Magæus and I believe he would do anything for gold—who can say that Cyrus has not promised to make him Satrap if Artaxerxes is dethroned? We shall start at dawn and engage a caravan at Ancyra. When we are within a few miles of Susa you will remain behind and I will go on alone to negotiate with Artaxerxes. I shall tell him that you were the one to discover Cyrus' plot, that your life was threatened in consequence, and that I persuaded you to go to Susa at once instead of taking refuge in Thrace. He will welcome you with open arms, no doubt of that. You, the greatest Strategos of your day. And you will have saved his throne, possibly his life; and your services to Persia will be inestimable. You will have another career, Alcibiades, and perhaps a greater one."

Her eyes were sparkling at the prospect of action and adventure, and his own flashed their response.

"Yes!" he said. "No plan could be better. But how will you explain your relationship with me? We counted on the presence and endorsement of Pharnabazus. Artaxerxes must not suspect that you ever betrayed Persia."

"Nor will he. I shall tell him that I sought you

out because I believed your place was at his side, and that the discovery of this plot against his throne merely precipitated my own intentions. He will suspect no attachment, and if we choose to marry it will be regarded as a fitting partnership."

"Yes, you are right—as you always are!" He sighed. "Partnership! Would that I had loved you from the first. What a fool! What a fool!"

"It was to be," she said calmly. "If you had you would have tired of me long since. And you need me far more to-day than you did then."

"I needed you always! But—yes—right again! Fifteen years—and such crowded years as mine—alter the very roots of a man's being. I was incapable of love then, and the best thing I know of myself is that you believed I was worth waiting for. But how often you must have been discouraged!"

She had risen and was standing opposite him. He looked at her with both passion and tenderness, and for the moment forgot his danger and his plans. She put her hand on his curly head, still as brightly bronze as in his youth.

"Sometimes," she said softly. "But never quite. And I came to Athens to win you. I never dreamed the time would be so long. But I have an infinite patience!"

He took her in his arms and kissed her, but when her head fell to his shoulder he stared into the future, swept by the sudden melancholy that sometimes assailed him. Nearly three years of perfect happiness! To-morrow they would have left this home that had sheltered them so warmly and be fugitives again. And there would be many separations were he welcomed to Susa. In a life of action there were few interludes for close communion with a beloved woman. Was it worth it? For a moment he was tempted to build himself a castle in the interior of Thrace and live with her there for the rest of his life. . . . But at the

thought of the Thracians he shuddered, and he was still Alcibiades. Ambition and love of action might slumber for a time, but only age could wither them, and he was in the prime of his years. He came to himself abruptly.

"Go now and sleep," he said. "I will follow you in a moment, but I must destroy some papers first."

"Very well, but do not be long. You too must sleep."

He remained in the living-room for half an hour, throwing papers on the burning logs, and writing a letter to Saon, bidding him follow with the two other servants and the luggage to Ancyra. Then he went out and flashed a lantern among the trees. The grove was deserted.

He locked both doors when he returned. Tiy was asleep and he lay down beside her without undressing. It was not only very late, but he was sensible of a vague uneasiness. The house was remote and unprotected. If it were true that Cyrus would take into consideration the friendship of Pharnabazus and determine to act at once . . . if there were a spy in the palace who spoke Greek; when a man has hundreds of slaves how may he know their secret accomplishments? . . . And if Tiy were right about Magæus . . . he had never liked that old uncle of Pharnabazus . . . a sly old fox, who was always being met in unexpected places . . . there were few doors in a Persian house . . . rugs were deep . . . curtains heavy . . . he fell asleep.

And as he slept he dreamed. He was walking about the grove with Magæus, who had suddenly discovered a great affection for him and sought him daily. But this was night. There was no moon, but many stars. Magæus, who had some knowledge of astronomy, bored him with a long dissertation. . . . He pointed to a great star that hung like a lantern between the interlacing boughs, and said in a sudden loud voice:

"That star shall be called Alcibiades, for that name should be known in the heavens as on the earth, and it shall be his home when Earth casts him forth."

And then, with one sweep of his scimitar, he cut off that head thrown back to follow his pointing finger, and held it aloft, laughing loudly.

And the eyes of the head saw the body in flames.

And then the nightmare was accompanied by an earthquake, and the body, no longer headless, lay on the heaving planet that would be rid of it; and it was the star now that was blazing until it covered the heavens, and a voice issued from it summoning him.

"Alcibiades! Alcibiades!"

And then he realized that Tiy was shaking him.

"Awake! Awake!" she cried frantically. "We shall both perish!"

He struggled up from the abyss of that nightmare and opened his eyes. The room was blazing about them.

His mind was always alert on the very instant of awakening, however disturbed his slumber may have been. He sprang from the bed and glanced into the next room. The house had been fired on all sides. Cyrus had lost no time!

Tiy had already dragged a blanket from the bed. Despite her protest that she could take care of herself, he flung it over her head, caught his dagger from his belt, and with one arm around her, and the other, about which he had wrapped his mantle, shielding his face, he dashed through the flames unhurt and out into the grove.

Three men stood there, men with intent faces lit by the flames. He flung Tiy to one side and rushed at them. They had made as if to hurl themselves upon him, but when they saw his eyes filled with fury, and his dagger, they fled.

He listened intently but heard nothing. No doubt, as they had hoped to burn him while he slept, they were unarmed and were hiding until they could crawl

away. Better go down to the village and remain there for the rest of the night.

And then he felt a sharp prick in his neck. Another in his arm. They were shooting darts and arrows from ambush. The implements whizzed sharply as they cut the air and he made a rush in the direction from which they came. Another arrow struck him in the chest. Another and another. The blood poured from a dozen wounds. He fell.

Tiy had been flung against a tree and the impact had stunned her. But she came to quickly and struggling from the blanket looked wildly about her. She had known as soon as she saw the flames on all sides that here was a carefully laid plot to murder Alcibiades. But he had escaped!

But where? For the moment she believed they had captured and carried him off. To what unimaginable horrors?

And then she saw him.

She went forward slowly and looked down on him. The dawn was coming and the house still flamed; the wide pool of blood in which he lay was visible. His eyes were open. In them was an expression of surprise—astonishment—that this could be the end of Alcibiades.

How long she stood there she never knew. A ray from the rising sun smote her face and she raised her heavy eyelids. Ra was red above the mountain in the east.

She leaned down and taking the limp form across her arms, lifted it slowly and held it outward and aloft. An offering to the sun-god, whose child he may have been.

THE END

NOTES

THE authorities cited for *The Immortal Marriage* may be taken as the background for *Vengeful Gods*. Among other works read for the present novel were *Modern Traits in Old Greek Life*, by Charles Burton Gulick ; *Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens*, by M. Croiset ; *Lawyers and Litigants in Ancient Athens*, by Robert J. Bonner ; *Stage Antiquities*, by James Turney Allen ; *The Life and Times of Akhnaton*, by Arthur P. Weigall ; and *Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation*, *The Business Life of Ancient Athens*, *The Growth of Criminal Law in Ancient Greece*, by George Miller Calhoun.

NOTE I : Professor Gulick calls attention in the volume mentioned above to the similarity of many of the ancient Greek colloquialisms and even slang to our own. One is also struck with this when reading Thucydides and Plato.

NOTE II : Professor Weigall calls attention to the similarity of the cvi psalm to the song of Akhnaton—quoted in the novel.

NOTE III : Alcibiades' epoch-making speech to the Spartans may be read in its entirety in the Jowett translation of Thucydides, as well as his speeches and those of Nicias before the sailing of the armament for Syracuse. See also the superb description of the siege of Syracuse and the retreat of Nicias.

NOTE IV : The song of Iacchus in Book I, chapter XXIV, in the novel is quoted from Gilbert Murray's translation of the *Frogs*. The drinking songs, etc., were either translated for me by Professor Calhoun or taken from Athænæus.

NOTE V : In the sixth century B.C. the men and women of Egypt enjoyed equal rights. In the fifth century the

women dominated. See Herodotus, and *The Dominant Sex*, by Mathilde and Mathias Verting. When Alexander conquered Egypt in the fourth century sex equality was again in order, with men on the upgrade. In the twentieth century we are once more entering an era of sex equality. For the possible issue read *The Dominant Sex*.

NOTE VI: Elections in Athens took place yearly.

NOTE VII: There is some difference of opinion regarding the names of the original royal families of Sparta.

NOTE VIII: I have been—as in *The Immortal Marriage*—somewhat eclectic in the use of *k* and *c* in Greek proper names.

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